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TRAVELS

IN

SYRIA AND EGYPT,

DURING

THE YEARS 1783, 1784, & 1785.

By M. C——F. VOLNEY,

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES.

Reviſed and corrected by the Author, and enlarged with an abſtract of two Arabic MS. S. containing much new and intereſting information reſpecting the Hiſtory, Population, Revenues, Taxes, and Arts of Egypt.—— And two Engravings not in any former edition, repreſenting the Pyramids and the Sphinx.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

EMBELLISHED WITH MAPS AND PLATES.

VOL. I.

PERTH:

PRINTED BY R. MORISON,
OR WILL. MORISON; WILLIAM CREECH, EDIN.
AND WEST & HUGHES, LONDON.

M.DCCC.I.

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BY THE TRANSLATOR.

WE are informed in an *Avis de l'editeur*, prefixed to the edition of Volney's Travels in Egypt and Syria from which this is tranſlated, that the abſence of the Author had prevented its earlier appearance. Much as it had been in demand, yet as M. Volney himſelf poſſeſſed the copy right, and the means of correction, the publication was neceſſarily delayed till his return from America, in the United States of which he had been travelling for three years. It is announced as the third edition, reviſed and corrected by the Author, with many additions and improvements. Thoſe adopted in this tranſlation are, 1. All the corrections and alterations from the original text. 2. An abſtract of two Arabic MS. S. of great merit, which contain new and intereſting details of the Hiſtory, Population, Revenues, Taxes, and Arts of Egypt, of the military eſtabliſhment and adminiſtration; the pigeon poſts; and the government of the Mamlouk Sultans when at the higheſt degree of their power. 3. Two new plates not in any former edition: one of the Sphinx, the other of the Pyramids, deſigned in the moſt correct manner, and of which the public will recognize the value,

" ſince

" ſince they are indebted for them to Citi-
" zen Caſſas, with whom the Author tra-
" velled, in 1785, from Acre to Alexandria;
" and who is now publiſhing a moſt magni-
" ficent and intereſting work, entitled a *Pic-*
" *tureſque Journey* through Syria, Phœni-
" cia, &c."

The additions that we have not thought it neceſſary to ſwell the ſize and increaſe the expence of theſe volumes with, as being leſs intereſting now, than they were at the period of the publication of the third Paris edition,—are, An exact ſtatement of the commerce of the Levant, extracted from the regiſter of the Chamber of Commerce at Verſailles,—and, Reflections on the war of the Ruſſians and Turks, publiſhed in 1784.

PREFACE.

OCTOBER, 1786.

FIVE years ago, when ſtill a young man, the death of a relation put me in poſſeſſion of a ſum of money, which I heſitated how to employ. I was adviſed by ſome of my friends to enjoy the capital, others recommended the purchaſe of an annuity; but, on reflection, I thought the ſum too ſmall to make any ſenſible addition to my income, and too great to be diſſipated in frivolous expences. Fortunate circumſtances having habituated my youth to ſtudy; I had acquired a taſte, nay, a thirſt for knowledge, and this acceſſion to my fortune appeared to me a freſh means of gratifying my inclination, and opening a wider career to my education. I had read, and frequently heard repeated, that of all the methods of adorning the mind, and forming the judgment, travelling is the moſt efficacious; I determined, therefore, on a plan of travelling, but to what part of the world I ſhould direct my courſe remained ſtill to be choſen: I wiſhed the ſcene of my obſervations to be new, or at leaſt brilliant. My own country, and the neighbouring nations, ſeemed to me either too well known, or too eaſy of acceſs: the riſing States of America, and the ſavages, were not without their temptations; but other conſiderations determined me in favour of Aſia. Syria, eſpecially, and Egypt, both with a view to what they once have been, and what they now are, appeared to me a field equally adapted to thoſe political and moral obſervations

observations with which I wished to occupy my mind. "Those are the countries," said I, "in which the greater part of the opinions that "govern us at this day have had their origin. "In them, those religious ideas took their rise, "which have operated so powerfully on our "private and public manners, on our laws, "and our social state. It will be interesting, "therefore, to be acquainted with the coun- "tries where they had their birth, the customs "and manners which nourished them, and the "spirit and character of the nations from whom "they have been received as sacred: to examine "to what degree this spirit, these manners, and "these customs, are altered or retained; to "ascertain the influence of climate, the effects "of the government, and the causes of the va- "rious habits and prejudices of these countries; "in a word, to judge from their present state, "what was their ancient situation."

On the other hand, considering the political situation of the Turkish empire, for the last twenty years, and reflecting on the consequences that might ensue, it appeared to me equally cu- rious and useful to acquire correct notions of its internal government, in order to form a just estimate of its real power and resources. With these intentions I set out towards the end of 1782 for Egypt. After continuing seven months at Cairo, finding too many obstacles to a pro- per examination of the interior parts of the country, and too little assistance in learning Arabic, I determined to proceed into Syria. The more tranquil state of that province cor-

responded

responded better with my intentions. Eight months residence among the Druses, in an Arabian convent, rendered the Arabic familiar to me, and enabled me to travel through all Syria during a whole year. On my return to France, after an absence of near three years, imagining my researches might prove of some utility, I resolved to publish a few observations on the present state of Syria and Egypt; and I was confirmed in this resolution by the difficulty attending travelling in those countries, which have, therefore, but seldom been visited, and are but imperfectly known. Travellers, in general, have directed their researches more to examine their antiquities, than their present situation; and almost all, hastily passing through them, have been deficient in the two principal means of acquiring knowledge, time, and the language of the country. Without possessing the language, it is impossible to appreciate either the genius or the character of a nation. Interpreters can never supply the defect of a direct communication. And without continuing a sufficient time, no traveller can form an accurate judgment, for the novelty of every thing around us naturally confounds and astonishes. The first tumult must subside, and the objects which present themselves be repeatedly examined, before we can be certain the ideas we have formed are just. To judge impartially requires more expence than is commonly imagined.

When I returned to France, I found that a late traveller * had anticipated me, with respect

* M. Savary.

ſpect to *Egypt*, by a firſt volume of *Letters* on that country. He has ſince publiſhed two others; but, as the field is extenſive and fertile, there ſtill remain ſome novelties to glean; and on ſubjects already treated, the world may poſſibly not be averſe to hear two witneſſes.

Syria, while it is as intereſting a ſubject as Egypt, is undoubtedly more novel. What has been already written on it by ſome travellers, is now grown obſolete, and, at beſt, very imperfect. I had at firſt determined to relate only what I myſelf had ſeen; but, deſirous, for the ſatisfaction of my readers, to complete my deſcription of that province, I was unwilling to deprive myſelf of the obſervations of others, when, my own experience had proved their veracity.

In my relation, I have endeavoured to maintain the ſpirit with which I conducted my reſearches into facts; that is, an impartial love of truth. I have reſtrained myſelf from indulging any ſallies of the imagination, though I am no ſtranger to the power of ſuch illuſion over the generality of readers; but I am of opinion that travels belong to the department of hiſtory, and not to that of romance. I have not therefore deſcribed countries as more beautiful than they appeared to me; I have not repreſented their inhabitants more virtuous, nor more wicked than I found them, and I have perhaps been enabled to ſee them ſuch as they really are, ſince I am indebted to them neither for benefits or injuries.

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TRAVELS

IN

EGYPT AND SYRIA.

STATE OF EGYPT.

CHAP. I.

Of the Country of Egypt in general, and the City of Alexandria.

IT is vain to attempt, by the perusal of books, to acquire an intimate acquaintance with the customs and manners of nations; the effect of narratives on the mind, will always be widely different from that of objects on the senses. The images which the former present, have neither correctness in design, nor liveliness in colouring; they are always indistinct, and leave but a slight impression, very easily effaced. This is more particularly experienced, when we are unacquainted with the objects to be laid before us; for the imagination, finding no terms of comparison previously formed, is obliged to collect and arrange new ideas; and, in this, ill directed, and hastily executed, it is not easy to confound the traits, and disfigure the forms. Can we then be astonished, if, on seeing the objects themselves, we cannot discover any resemblance

between the originals and the copies; and if every impreſſion appears new?

This is exactly the ſituation of a ſtranger who arrives, in Turkey by ſea. Uſeleſs is all he has read in hiſtories and travels; in vain has he, from their deſcriptions, attempted to repreſent to himſelf the appearance of the countries, the cities, dreſſes, and manners of the inhabitants: every thing is new; he is dazzled with their variety: every idea he has previouſly formed vaniſhes; and he is abſorbed in ſurprize and amazement.

No place more remarkably produces this effect, and confirms this remark, than Alexandria in Egypt. The name of this city, which reminds one of the moſt wonderful of men; the name of the country, which recalls the recollection of ſo many great events; the picturesque appearance of the place; the ſpreading palm-trees; terraced houſes, which ſeem without a roof; the lofty ſlender minarets, all impreſs the traveller with the idea that he is in another world. A variety of new objects meet every ſenſe; a language of barbarous ſounds, and ſharp and guttural accents, hurt the ear; dreſſes of the moſt uncommon and whimſical kind, and figures of the ſtrangeſt appearance, the eye. In place of our ſmooth ſhaved faces, ſide curls, triangular hats, and ſhort, cloſe dreſſes, he ſees, with aſtoniſhment, tanned countenances, beards and muſtachios, large rolls of ſtuff wreathed round their bald heads; long garments, reaching from the neck to the feet, ſerve rather to veil than clothe the body; pipes ſix feet in length,

length, which every perſon has; hideous camels, carrying water in leathern ſacks; and aſſes, ſaddled and bridled, tripping along with their riders in ſlippers; he obſerves their markets ill ſupplied with dates, and flat round little loaves; a filthy drove of half ſtarved dogs running through the ſtreets; and a kind of wandering phantoms, which, under a long drapery of a ſingle piece, reveal nothing human, but two eyes, which diſcover they are women. In this croud of uncommon objects, his mind is beyond reflection; nor is it till he gets to his lodging, ſo deſirable on landing after a long voyage, that, more calm, he reflects on the narrow, ill paved ſtreets, and low houſes, which, though not calculated to admit much light, are ſtill more obſcured by lattice work; the meagre, ſwarthy inhabitants, who walk bare-footed, without any other clothing than a blue ſhirt, faſtened with a leathern girdle, or red handkerchief; while the univerſal ſymptoms of miſery, obvious in all he meets; and the ſecrecy which reigns about their houſes, diſcover to him the rapacity of oppreſſion, and the diſtruſt of ſlavery.

But all his attention is ſoon attracted by thoſe ſtupenduous ruins which appear on the land ſide of the city. In other countries, ruins are objects of curioſity. We can ſcarcely diſcover, in unfrequented places, ſome ancient caſtle, whoſe decay rather beſpeaks the deſertion of its maſter, than the wretchedneſs of the neighbourhood: in Alexandria, on the contrary, we no ſooner leave the New Town, than we are ſurpriſed with the ſight of an immenſe tract of

ground covered with ruins. In a walk of two hours, you follow a double line of walls and towers, which form the circumference of ancient Alexandria. The ground is covered with the ruins of lofty buildings; whole fronts moulder-ing, roofs fallen in, decayed battlements, and the ſtones corroded and disfigured by ſaltpetre. The traveller paſſes a vaſt plain, furrowed with trenches, pierced with wells, divided by ruin-ous walls, covered with ancient columns, and modern tombs, amid palm-trees and nopals,* and where no living creature is to be ſeen, but owls, bats, and jackalls. The inhabitants, fa-miliar with this ſcene, ſee it without emotion; but the ſtranger, in whom the recollection of ancient ages is revived by the novelty of ſur-rounding objects, feels a ſenſation, which fre-quently diſſolves him in tears, and begets re-flections which fill his heart with ſadneſs, while his ſoul is elevated by their grandeur.

I do not intend to repeat the deſcriptions, given by all travellers, of the remarkable anti-quities of Alexandria. The reader will find in Norden, Pocock, Niebuhr, and Savary, every neceſſary detail on the baths of Cleopatra, the two obeliſks which bear her name, the cata-combs, reſervoirs, and the Pillar, improperly called Pompey's.† Theſe names are majeſtic; but

* Commonly called *raquette*, the cochineal tree.

† In future it ſhould be called the Pillar of Severus, ſince M. Savary has proved it was erected in honour of that Emperor. Travellers differ as to its dimenſions; but by the calculation generally admitted at Alexandria, the height of the ſhaft, with the capital, is 96 feet, and the circumference 28 feet, 3 inches.

but the originals do not correſpond with the figures we have ſeen of them. The pillar alone, from its height, prodigious circumference, and the ſolitary ſituation, impreſſes a genuine ſentiment of admiration and reſpect.

Alexandria is, at preſent, the emporium of an extenſive trade. It is the harbour for the various commodities exported from Egypt by the Mediterranean, the rice of Damietta excepted. The Europeans have eſtabliſhments there, where factors ſell their merchandize by barter. Veſſels are conſtantly here from Marſeilles, Leghorn, Venice, Raguſa, and the territories of the Grand Seignior; but it is dangerous to winter in. The new port, the only harbour for the Europeans, is choaked up with ſand; inſomuch that, in ſtormy weather, ſhips are in danger of bilging; and, the bottom being alſo rocky, the cables ſoon chafe and ſeparate, ſo that, one veſſel driving againſt another, and that againſt a third, they all perhaps go to the bottom. There was a diſmal proof of this ſixteen or eighteen years ago, when 42 veſſels were daſhed to pieces on the mole, in a gale of wind, from the north-weſt; and numbers have been wrecked there at different times ſince. The old harbour, the entrance to which is covered by a neck of land called the Cape of Figs,* is not liable to this inconvenience; but the Turks ſuffer no ſhips to enter it but thoſe of Muſſulmen. Europeans will aſk, why do they not repair the New Port? The anſwer is, that, in Turkey, they deſtroy every thing, and repair nothing. The old har-

* *Ras el-tin*, pronounced *teen*.

bour will be deſtroyed, alſo, as ſhip-ballaſt has been continually thrown into it for two hundred years paſt. The ſpirit of the Turkiſh government is to deſtroy the labours of former ages, and the hopes of futurity, becauſe the barbarity of ignorance and deſpotiſm never thinks of to-morrow.

In time of war, Alexandria is of no importance; not being fortified; even the Pharos, with its lofty towers, cannot be defended. There are not four cannon in it fit for ſervice, nor a gunner to point them. The five hundred Janiſaries, who ſhould compoſe the garriſon, are reduced to half that number, and know nothing but how to ſmoke a pipe. Fortunately for the Turks, the Franks have an intereſt in preſerving this city. One Ruſſian or Malteſe frigate would lay it in aſhes; but the conqueſt would be of no value. A foreign power could not ſupport itſelf there, as the country has no water. This muſt be brought from the Nile by the Kalidj, or canal of twelve leagues, which conducts it thither every year at the time of the inundation, and fills the vaults or reſervoirs, under the ancient city, which muſt ſupply till next year. It is evident, therefore, that did a foreign power take poſſeſſion, the canal would be ſhut, and every ſupply of water cut off.

This canal alone connects Alexandria with Egypt; for, from its ſituation without the Delta, and the ſoil, it really belongs to the African deſerts; its environs are ſandy, flat and barren; no trees, or houſes; nothing to be ſeen but the

plant

plant * which yields the Kali; and a row of palm-trees, which follows the courſe of the *Kalidj* or canal.

Roſetta is in fact the entrance into Egypt; the natives name it *Raſhid:* there the African ſands end, and a black, rich, and loamy ſoil, the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of Egypt, begins: there, alſo, we firſt behold the waters of the far famed Nile, which, falling between two ſteep banks, greatly reſembles the Seine between Auteuil and Paſſy. The foreſts of palm-trees, on each ſide; the orchards, watered by its ſtreams; the lemon, orange, banana, peach, and other trees, by their never ceaſing verdure, render Roſetta aſtoniſhingly delightful, and its beauties appear ſtill more inchanting compared with Alexandria, and the ſea we have juſt left; and from hence to Cairo, every object increaſes the effect.

Aſcending the river, we begin to acquire ſome general notion of the ſoil, climate, and productions of this celebrated country. Nothing can more reſemble its appearance than the marſhes of the lower Loire, or the plains of Flanders; in place however of the numerous trees and country houſes of the latter, we muſt conceive ſome thin woods of palms and ſycamores, and a few villages of mud-walled cottages, erected on artificial mounds. All this part of Egypt is ſo level, and low, that within three leagues of the coaſt we diſcover the palm-trees, and the ſands on which they grow; from thence,

* Glaſs-wort, which the Arabs call *el-kali;* hence the name of the ſalt *al-kali.*

thence, as we aſcend the river, the declivity is ſo gentle, that the water does not flow faſter than a league an hour. The proſpect of the country offers little variety; nothing but palm-trees, ſingle, or in clumps, which become fewer as you advance: wretched villages of mud-walled huts, and a boundleſs plain, which at different ſeaſons is an ocean of freſh water, a miry moraſs, a verdant field, or a duſty deſart; and all around an extenſive and foggy horizon, where the eye is fatigued and diſguſted; till at length, near the junction of the two branches of the river, the mountains of Grand Cairo are diſcovered in the eaſt; and to the ſouth-weſt, three detached maſſes appear, which, from their triangular ſhape, are known to be the Pyramids. We now enter a valley turning to the ſouthward, between two ridges of parallel eminences. That to the eaſt, which extends to the Red Sea, merits the name of a mountain, from its ſteep aſcent; and that of a deſart, from its naked and wild aſpect *; to the weſtern is nothing but a ridge of rock, covered with ſand, which has been very properly termed a natural mound, or cauſeway. To deſcribe Egypt in two words, let the reader conceive, on one ſide, a narrow ſea and rocks; on the other, immenſe plains of ſand, and, betwixt theſe, a river flowing through a valley of 150 leagues in length, and from three to ſeven wide, which, at the diſtance of thirty leagues from the ſea, divides into two arms, the branches of which wander over

* Called in Arabic *mokattam*, or *berun mountain*.

ver a country where they meet no obſtacles, and which is almoſt a continued plain.

The univerſal taſte for natural hiſtory, now, to the honour of this age, become ſo general, requires doubtleſs ſome remarks as to the nature of the ſoil, and the minerals of this extenſive region. But, unfortunately, the mode of travelling here is ill adapted to ſuch reſearches. It is not in Turkey as in Europe: with us, travels are agreeable excurſions; there, they are difficult and dangerous enterprizes, eſpecially for Europeans, whom the ſuperſtitious natives conſider ſorcerers, come to diſcover by magic, treaſures which the Genii have concealed under the ruins. This ridiculous, but deep rooted opinion, added to continual wars and diſturbances, makes the traveller inſecure, and prevents diſcovery. Nobody dares even walk alone in the fields: nor can he procure any body to accompany him. Confined therefore to the banks of the river, and a route frequented by every one, which can afford no new information, it is only by comparing what we ourſelves have ſeen with the obſervations of others that ſome general ideas can be procured.

From this compariſon, we ſhall find room to conclude that the baſis of all Egypt, from Aſouan, (formerly Syene) to the Mediterranean, is one continued bed of a whitiſh calcareous ſoft ſtone, and containing ſhells analogous to thoſe in the two neighbouring ſeas *. This quality is obſervable in the Pyramids, and the Lybian rock on

* They conſiſt chiefly of echini, volutes, bivalves, and a ſpecies in the form of lentils. See Shaw's Travels.

on which they ſtand. This ſtone is to be found alſo in the Ciſterns, the Catacombs of Alexandria, and the projecting ſhelves on the coaſt. It is alſo found in the Eaſtern mountain, in the latitude of Cairo, and the materials with which that city is built. In ſhort, this calcareous ſtone, forms the immenſe quarries extending from Sawadi to Manfalout, for upwards of twenty-five leagues, according to the teſtimony of Father Sicard. That miſſionary alſo, informs us, that marble is found in the valley of *Carts* *, at the bottom of the mountains bordering on the Red Sea, and in thoſe to the north-eaſt of Aſouan. Between that place and the Cataract the principal quarries of red granite are found; but there muſt be others farther down, for, on the oppoſite ſhore, the mountains of Oreb, Sinai, and their dependencies †, two days journey northward, are formed of it. Near Aſouan, to the north weſt, is a quarry of ſerpentine ſtone, of which in its native ſtate the inhabitants make veſſels which ſtand the fire. And, in the ſame parallel, on the Red Sea, was formerly a mine of emeralds, all traces of which are now loſt. Copper is the only metal of this country which the ancients mention. The road to Suez is the place where the greateſt quantity of what are called Egyptian flints, or pebbles, is found, though the bottom is of a calcareous ſtone, hard and ſonorous; there likewiſe are found, thoſe ſtones which, from their ſhape have been ſuppoſed

* Savary's Letters, Vol. I. page 437.

† The former is grey, ſpotted with black, and ſometimes red.

posed to be petrified wood. Indeed they resemble logs cut slanting at the ends, and full of little holes, and might easily be taken for petrefactions; but accidentally finding a considerable quantity of these, in the road of the Haouatat Arabs *, I carefully examined them, and am satisfied they are minerals †.

Both the lakes of Natron, described by Father Sicard, are more interesting; they too are in the desart of Shayat, or St Macarius, west of the Delta. Their bed is a kind of natural trench, three or four leagues long, by a quarter wide, the bottom hard and stony. They are dry for nine months in the year, but, in winter, a water of a reddish violet colour oozes from the earth, which fills the lake fully five or six feet; the return of the great heats occasioning this to evaporate, a bed of salt two feet thick, and very hard remains, which is broken with bars of iron. They produce thirty thousand quintals annually. This phenomenon, indicating a soil impregnated with salt, is very general throughout all Egypt. In every part of it, on digging, a brackish water is found, containing natron, marine salt, and a little nitre. Even when the gardens are overflowed, for watering them, the ground, after the absorption of the water, appears glazed over with salt; and this soil, like all the continent of Africa and Arabia, seems to be either composed of salt, or to produce it.

Amidst

* Every tribe has its particular road, to avoid disputes.

† Besides, there are not ten trees in this desart, and it seems incapable of producing any.

Amidſt theſe minerals of various qualities, and that fine and reddiſh coloured ſand peculiar to Africa, the earth of the valley through which the Nile flows, diſcovers properties which mark it of a diſtinct claſs. Its black colour, and clayey, cementing quality, prove its foreign origin; and, indeed, it is conducted by the river from the heart of Abyſſinia; as if Nature had artfully determined to form an habitable iſland in a country to which ſhe had denied every thing. Without this fat and light mud, Egypt would have been completely barren; that alone ſeems to contain the ſeeds of vegetation and fertility: and theſe again are owing to the river, which depoſits them.

CHAP II.

Of the River Nile, and the enlargement of the Delta.

THE very phyſical and political exiſtence of Egypt is owing to the Nile; that river alone provides that chief neceſſity of animal life, water, ſo frequently, and ſo diſtreſsfully, experienced in hot climates; and without rain, every where ſupplies vegetation with moiſture; the earth, by three months inundation, imbibing ſufficiently for the reſt of the year. Were it not for this, only a very ſmall corner of the country could be cultivated; and even that with immenſe labour; it is not without cauſe, therefore,

therefore, that this river has been ſtiled the ſource of plenty, happineſs, and life. Had Albuquerque, the Portugueſe, been able to execute his ſcheme, of turning its courſe from Ethiopia into the Red Sea, this country, now ſo fertile, would have become a wild deſert, ſurrounded by ſolitudes. When we think of the uſe which man makes of his powers, how little cauſe have we to regret that Nature has not granted him more!

With good reaſon, therefore, the Egyptians have always profeſſed a religious veneration for the Nile*; but an European muſt be excuſed, if, on hearing them boaſt of its beauty, he ſmiles at their ignorance. Never will theſe troubled, muddy, waters have for him the charms of chryſtal fountains and limpid ſtreams; never, but from ſome very urgent excitement, will a ſwarthy Egyptian female, dripping from theſe yellow and muddy waters, remind him of the bathing Naiads. For ſix months of the year the water is ſo muddy that it muſt have time to ſettle before it can be drunk†: and, during three months preceding the inundation, of an inconſiderable depth, it becomes heated, green, fœtid, and full of worms; and they are obliged to have recourſe to that which had been formerly

* They called it *holy*, *bleſſed*, *ſacred*; and, when the new waters appear, that is, on the opening of the canals, mothers are ſeen plunging their children into the ſtream, from a perſuaſion that theſe waters have a purifying and divine virtue, ſuch as the ancients aſcribed to every river.

† Bitter almonds are uſed, for this purpoſe, with which the veſſel is rubbed, and the water then becomes really light and good. But thirſt alone, or prejudice, could make any perſon prefer it to that of our fountains and large rivers, ſuch as the Seine, or the Loire.

ly drawn and preſerved in ciſterns. At all theſe ſeaſons, people pf delicacy perfume it, and cool it by evaporation*.

Travellers and Hiſtorians have ſaid ſo much about the Nile, and its phenomena, that I was at firſt ready to think the ſubject exhauſted; but, as ideas vary reſpecting the moſt invariable facts; frequently while there is nothing *new* to ſay, there is ſtill ſomething to correct. This appears to me to be the caſe, with ſome opinions of M. Savary, in his Letters lately publiſhed. The poſitions he endeavours to eſtabliſh concerning the enlargement, and ſource of the Delta, are ſo oppoſite to the concluſions I have drawn from the very facts and authorities which he quotes, that I think it my duty to ſubmit our contradictory opinions to the public tribunal. This ſeems to me the more neceſſary, as a reſidence of two years, upon the ſpot, gives a weight to M. Savary's opinion, which would ſoon become authority: let us ſtate the queſtions, and conſider, in the firſt place, the extenſion, or enlargement of the Delta.

The

* Earthen unglazed veſſels, are kept in every apartment, from which the water continually tranſpires; this produces greater coolneſs in proportion as it is more conſiderable; for which reaſon, theſe veſſels are frequently ſuſpended in paſſages where there are currents of air, and under the ſhade of trees. In ſeveral parts of Syria they drink the water which has thus tranſpired; in Egypt they drink that which remains; beſides, in no other country is ſo much water uſed. The firſt thing an Egyptian does, on entering the houſe, is to ſeize the *kolla*, (pitcher of water) and take a hearty draught of it; and, from their perpetual perſpiration, they feel no inconvenience from this practice.

The Greek hiſtorian, to whom we owe almoſt all our knowledge of ancient Egypt, and whoſe authority every day's obſervation confirms, wrote thus two-and-twenty centuries ago: "That part of Egypt inhabited by the Greeks, "(the Delta) is an acquired land, the gift of "the river, as is all the marſhy country a-"long its banks, for three days ſail up the Nile*.

The reaſons alledged in ſupport of this aſſertion prove that it was not founded on prejudice. "In fact," adds he, "the ſoil, which is a black "and fat mud, is abſolutely different, both "from that of Africa, which is a reddiſh ſand, "and that of Arabia, which is clayey and ſton-"ey.—This mud is brought from Ethiopia, by "the Nile.—And the ſhells found in the deſert "ſufficiently demonſtrate that the ſea formerly "extended farther into the country."

Herodotus, however, while he admits this encroachment of the river, which is ſo probable, has not determined its proportions. Theſe M. Savary has fancied he could ſupply; let us examine his reaſoning.

"While it encreaſed in height, Egypt†," ſays he, "augmented in length likewiſe; to prove "which, among ſeveral facts which hiſtory has "preſerved, I ſhall ſelect only one. During "the reign of Pſammeticus, the Mileſians, with "thirty ſhips, landed at the mouth of the Bol-"bitine branch, at preſent the branch of Roſet-"ta, where they fortified themſelves, and built

* Herodot. lib. 2. p 105. edit. Weſſling.

† Savary's Letters on Egypt, Vol. I. p. 17 of the Engliſh Tranſlation, Second Edit.

" city, which they called Metelis, (Strabo, lib. " 17.) now named Faoüa, but which in the " Coptic vocabularies, is ſtill called Meſſil. This " city, which was formerly a ſea-port, ſtands, " at preſent, nine leagues from the ſhore; which " ſpace the Delta has lengthened, from the age " of Pſammeticus to the preſent."

Nothing can be more accurate at firſt ſight than this reaſoning; but, on examining the original, M. Savary's authority, we find, that the principal fact is wanting; the following is a literal tranſlatiou of the text of Strabo.

" Beyond the Bolbitine mouth, is a low ſandy cape, called the horn of the Lamb, which " ſtretches far (into the ſea); beyond that, the " watch-tower of Perſeus, and the wall of the " Mileſians; for the Mileſians, in the reign of " Cyaxares, King of the Medes, cotemporary " with Pſammeticus, King of Egypt, arriving " at the Bolbitine mouth, with thirty veſſels, " landed there, and erected the work which " bears their name. Some time after, having " advanced into the Saitic Nome, and vanquiſhed Inarus, in a naval battle, they founded the " city of Naucratis, a little above Schedia. Beyond the wall of the Mileſians, as we approach " the Sebennytic mouth, are lakes, one of which " is named the Butic." Strabonis Geograph. Interp. Caſaubon. Edit. 1707. Lib. 17. p. 1153.

Such is the paſſage, relative to the Mileſians; no mention in made of Metelis, a name not to be found in his whole work. Danville* has copied

* See the excellent Memoir of Danville, on Egypt, in 4to. 1765, p. 77.

copied it from Ptolemy, who does not aſcribe it to the Mileſians: and unleſs M. Savary can prove the identity of Metelis, and the Mileſian wall, by reſearches on the ſpot, his concluſions ought not to be admitted.

He thinks, too, that Homer affords him a ſimilar teſtimony in thoſe paſſages wherein he ſpeaks of the diſtance of the iſle of Pharos from Egypt*; the reader may judge whether this is better founded. I quote Madame Dacier's tranſlation, which, though leſs elegant, is more literal than any other, and our buſineſs is with the literal. Menelaus is made to ſpeak thus:

"In the Egyptian ſea, oppoſite the Nile, "there is a certain iſland, called Pharos; diſ- "tant from one of the mouths of that river a- "bout as far as a veſſel can ſail in one day be- "fore the wind."—and, ſoon after, Proteus ſays to Menelaus: "Inflexible deſtiny does not per- "mit you to reviſit your dear country—until "you ſhall have returned again into the river "Egyptus, and offered unblemiſhed hecatombs "to the immortals."

"He ſaid," reſumes Menelaus, "and my "heart was ſeized with grief and ſadneſs, be- "cauſe this God commanded me to return in- "to the river Egyptus, the way to which is dif- "ficult and dangerous." Odyſſ. lib. 4.

From theſe paſſages, eſpecially the former, M. Savary infers that the Pharos, which, at preſent is connected with the main land, was at that time very diſtant from it; but when Homer ſpeaks of the diſtance of this iſland, he does

* See Savary's Letters, p. 17.

not mean its diſtance from the oppoſite ſhore as that traveller tranſlates, but from the land of Egypt, and the river Nile. Again, by a day's ſail, we muſt not underſtand the indefinite ſpace, which the veſſels, or, ſpeaking more properly, the boats, of the ancients could paſs through in a day; the Greeks uſed this expreſſion to denote a certain fixed diſtance of 540 ſtadia. Herodotus, (lib. 11. p. 106 and 107,) who clearly aſcertains this fact, gives an example of it, when he ſays that the Nile has encroached upon the ſea the whole extent of country for three days ſail up the river; and the 1620 ſtadia, ariſing from this computation, agree with the more accurate meaſure of 1500 ſtadia, which he gives us in another place, as the diſtance of Heliopolis from the ſea. Now, ſuppoſing, with Danville, the 540 ſtadia for 27,000 toiſes, or near half a degree*, we ſhall find this meaſure is the diſtance of the Pharos from the Nile; it extends exactly to two-thirds of a league above Roſetta, a ſituation where we have ground to believe the city which gave name to the Bolbitine mouth ſtood; and it is remarkable that it was this which the Greeks frequented, and where the Mileſians landed, a century and a half after Homer. It is, therefore, far from being demonſtrated, that the increaſe of the Delta, or the Continent, was ſo rapid as has been ſuppoſed; and, were we diſpoſed to maintain it, we ſhould ſtill have to explain how this ſhore, which has not increaſed a league from Alexander's time ſhould have gained

* This is only 1,3000 toiſes too much.

gained eleven in the far ſhorter period from Menelaus to that conqueror.*

A more ſatisfactory calculation of this encroachment might have been deduced from the dimenſions of Egypt, given by Herodotus: the following are his words: "The breadth of E-"gypt, along the ſea-coaſt, from the Gulph of "Plinthine, to Lake Serbonis, near Mount Ca-"ſius, is three thouſand ſix hundred ſtadia; "and its length, from the ſea to Heliopolis, fif-"teen hundred ſtadia."

Let us keep by this laſt meaſure, which alone concerns the preſent diſpute. Danville has proved, in his own ſagacious manner, that the ſtadium of Herodotus is equivalent to between 50 and 51 French toiſes; and at the latter calculation, the 1500 ſtadia are equal to 76,000 toiſes, which, after the rate of 57,000 to a degree, gives 1 degree and near 20 minutes and a half. Now, from the aſtronomical obſervations of M. Niebuhr, who travelled for the King of Denmark, in 1761,† the difference of latitude

* It may be alledged that Homer is not exact when he ſays the Pharos was oppoſite the Nile; but, in his excuſe, it may be ſaid, that when he calls Egypt the extremity of the world, he cannot be underſtood to ſpeak with preciſion. We muſt alſo obſerve, that the Canopic branch ran formerly by the lakes, opening itſelf a paſſage near Aboukir; and if, as the appearance of the country leads me to think, it paſſed even to the weſt of Aboukir, which muſt have been an iſland, Homer, might ſay, with reaſon, that the Pharos was oppoſite the Nile.

† See *Voyage en Arabie*, by C. Niebuhr, in 4to. tom. 1. which muſt be diſtinguiſhed from his *Deſcription de l'Arabie*; 1 vol. in 4to.

tude between Heliopolis, (now called Matarea) and the ſea, being 1 degree 29 minutes, at Damietta, and 1 degree 24, at Roſetta, there is a difference, on one ſide, of 3 minutes and a half, or a league and a half encroachment; and 8 minutes and a half, or 3 leagues and a half, on the other; that is, the ancient ſhore anſwers to 11,800 toiſes below Roſetta, which correſponds very nearly to my conception of the paſſage in Homer, while, on the branch of Damietta, it falls 950 toiſes below that city. No doubt, in meaſuring directly on the map, the line of the ſhore will be found to be about 3 leagues higher on the ſide of Roſetta, and to fall on Damietta itſelf, which the angle produced by the difference of longitude occaſions. But, in that caſe, Bolbitinum, mentioned by Herodotus, is not within its preſcribed limits; and it is no longer true that Buſiris (Abouſir) was ſituated, as Herodotus has told us, (lib. ii. p. 123.) in the middle of the Delta. It muſt be confeſſed that the relations of the ancients, and our knowledge of the country, are not ſufficiently preciſe, exactly to determine the ſucceſſive encroachments. In order to reaſon accurately, reſearches like thoſe of the Comte de Choiſeul, on the Meander,* would be neceſſary; the ground ſhould be dug into, but ſuch labours require means and opportunities which few travellers poſſeſs; and a ſtill greater difficulty is, that the ſandy ſoil, which forms the lower Delta, undergoes conſiderable changes every day. Theſe are not altogether owing to the Nile and the ſea; the wind itſelf is

* See Voyage Pittoreſque de la Grece, tom. 2.

a very powerful agent, and occaſionally choaks up the canals, and drives back the river, as it has done at the Canopic branch. At other times, it collects the ſand, and buries the ruins, ſo that their very remembrance is loſt. M. Niebuhr relates a remarkable inſtance of this. While at Roſetta, in 1762, he accidentally diſcovered, under the ſandy hillocks, to the ſouthward of that city, ſeveral ancient ruins, and, among others, twenty fine marble columns of Grecian workmanſhip, without being able to glean any tradition even of the name of the place.* This appears to me to have been the caſe with all the adjacent deſert. This tract, formerly interſected by large canals, and filled with towns, now preſents only hillocks of a yellowiſh ſand, very fine, which the wind collects at the foot of every obſtacle, and which frequently buries the palm-trees; wherefore, notwithſtanding the induſtrious reſearches of Danville, we cannot be certain he is correct in the ſituations he has aſſigned to ſeveral places of antiquity.

M. Savary has been much exacter in what he has quoted concerning one of the changes the Nile has undergone, (Letter i. p. 12.) by which it appears, that river formerly flowed entirely through Lybia, to the ſouth of Memphis. But what Herodotus relates, on whoſe authority this depends, is not without difficulties. When that hiſtorian, therefore, aſſerts, (lib. ii. p. 2.) from the prieſts of Heliopolis, that Menes, the firſt king of Egypt, dammed up the elbow, formed by the river, two leagues and a quarter

* This ſituation correſponds with that of Bolbitinum.

ter (one hundred ſtadia) above Memphis, and dug a new channel, to the eaſtward of that city, does it not follow that Memphis was at that time ſituated in a barren deſert, far from any water? And how improbable is ſuch an hypotheſis! Can we literally believe in theſe immenſe works of Menes, who is ſuppoſed to have founded a city, which is mentioned as exiſting before his time; who is ſuppoſed to have dug canals and lakes, thrown bridges over rivers, and erected palaces, towers, and temples; and all this in the earlieſt age of the nation, and during the infancy of all the arts? Is not this Menes himſelf an hiſtorical chimera? And are not all the ſtories of the prieſts, concerning this remote antiquity, wholly mythological? I am inclined to imagine, therefore, that the turning the courſe of the Nile, by Menes, was merely a diverſion of ſome ſmaller branch, to increaſe the inundation of the Delta; and this ſeems the more probable, ſince, notwithſtanding the teſtimony of Herodotus, this part of the valley, ſeen from the Pyramids, preſents nothing which could have obſtructed the courſe of the river. Beſides, I cannot but think that M. Savary preſumes too much, when he makes the great channel, called *bahr bela ma*, or river without water, terminate at the mound before-mentioned, above Memphis, and ſuppoſes it to have been the ancient bed of the Nile. Every traveller which Danville mentions, places that termination at the Lake of Fayoum, of which it appears a

more

more natural continuation.* To have demonſtrated this, he ſhould have perſonally viſited the places themſelves; and I never heard, at Cairo, that M. Savary advanced farther to the ſouthward than the Pyramids of Djiza. The formation of the Delta, which he deduces from this alteration, is equally improbable; for, in this ſudden change, why ſhould we imagine, the "enormous weight of the waters, diſcharging "themſelves into this gulph, would repel thoſe "of the ſea?" *Letters on Egypt*, vol. i. p. 13. The meeting of two maſſes of fluid only produces a mixture, from which a common level ſoon reſults; if we imagine the water increaſed, we can only expect that more land will be covered. It is true, M. Savary adds, "the ſand "and mud carried along by the Nile, were ac-"cumulated, and the Delta, very inconſidera-"ble at firſt, roſe from the ſea, by encroaching "on its limits." But how can an iſland riſe out of the ſea? Running waters level rather than heap up. This leads us to conſider the queſtion as to the elevation of the Delta.

CHAP.

* Indeed, we ſhall be more inclined, from examining the map, to believe that this was the ancient courſe of the river: as for the petrefactions of maſts and whole veſſels, ſpoken of by Father Sicard, thoſe, to gain credit, ſhould be atteſted by more enlightened travellers than that miſſionary.

CHAP. III.

Of the Riſe of the Delta.

ALTHOUGH Herodotus, on whoſe authority M. Savary founds this hypotheſis, has not very ſatisfactorily explained the fact, he has a paſſage from which certain poſitive concluſions are drawn. M. Savary ſays, *(Letter I.* p. 13.)

"In the mean time of Mœris, who lived five "hundred years before the Trojan war, eight "cubits were ſufficient to overflow the whole "Delta *(Herodot. lib.* 2.); fifteen were neceſſary "in the age of Herodotus; under the Roman "empire, ſixteen; under the Arabs, ſeventeen: "eighteen cubits is the ſtandard of abundance "at this day; and the Nile ſometimes riſes to "two-and-twenty. Thus, in the ſpace of 3284 "years, we ſee the Delta has riſen fourteen "cubits."

All this may be true, if we admit the facts as they are ſtated; but, on a careful examination, we ſhall find circumſtances which controvert both the premiſes and concluſion. Let us firſt attend to Herodotus:

"The Egyptian prieſts," ſays that author, *(lib.* ii. *p.* 100.) "report that in the reign of "King Mœris, the Nile inundated the Delta, "if it only roſe to eight cubits. At preſent it "does not overflow it unleſs it attain ſixteen, or "at leaſt fifteen. Now, from the death of Mœ-

"ris

" ris to this time, nine hundred years have not " yet elapſed."

Let us calculate from theſe materials:

From Mœris to Herodotus -	900 years,
From Herodotus to the year 1777, two thouſand two hundred and thirty-ſeven, or if he will -	2,240
Total, -	3,140

Why this difference of 144 years in the calculation of M. Savary? Why does he uſe different numbers from his author? But let us paſs over the chronology.

In the time of Herodotus, ſixteen cubits were neceſſary, or at leaſt fifteen, to overflow the Delta. The ſame number was ſufficient in the time of the Romans; fifteen and ſixteen are invariably the meaſure.

" Before the time of Petronius," ſays Strabo (*lib.* xvii.) " plenty was not known in Delta " unleſs the Nile roſe to fourteen cubits. But " this Governor obtaining by art what nature " denied, under his prefecture, plenty has been " known at twelve." The Arabs ſay the ſame. An Arabic book is ſtill extant, which contains a table of all the riſings of the Nile, from the firſt year of the Hegira (A. D. 622), down to the year 875, (A. D. 1470); which aſcertains that, in the lateſt times, whenever the Nile has fourteen cubits depth in its channel, there is a harveſt ſufficient for the year; if it reaches ſixteen, ſufficient for two years; but when it falls below fourteen, or exceeds eighteen, famine enſues; which correſponds exactly with Herodo-

tus. The book I quote is written in Arabic, but its contents are in every one's hands, who chooſes to conſult the word *Nile* in the Bibliotheque Orientale of D'Herbelot, or the Extracts from Kalkaſendas, in Dr Shaw's Travels.

Nor is there any uncertainty as to the meaſure of theſe cubits, Fréret, Danville, and M. Bailli have proved that the Egyptian cubit, invariably twenty-four digits, is equal to 20¼ French inches*; and the preſent cubit, called *Draa maſri*, is exactly divided into twenty-four digits, and contains 20¼ of our inches. But the columns with which the riſe of the Nile is meaſured, have undergone an alteration which muſt not be paſſed over unnoticed.

"In the earlier ages, and while the Arabs "governed Egypt," ſays *Kalkaſendas*, "they "perceived that when the Nile did not attain "the ſtandard neceſſary for plenty, every one "was anxious to lay in ſufficient proviſion for "the year, which occaſioned great inconveni-"encies. Complaints of this were made to the "Caliph Omar, who gave orders to Amrou to "enquire into the matter; and he reported as "follows:—Having made the reſearches you "commanded, we have found that when the "Nile riſes to 14 cubits, it produces a ſufficient "harveſt for the year; when it attains ſixteen "cubits we have plenty; but that at twelve and "eighteen dearth enſues. We alſo find that the "cuſtom of making known the height of the "waters

* I have meaſured ſeveral of them by a *pied de Roi, ſtandard foot* of copper; but I found they varied from one to three lines. The *Draa ſtambouli* meaſures twenty-eight digits, or twenty-four inches, wanting one line.

"waters by proclamation, is productive of many "irregularities, and is very disadvantageous to "commerce."

To rectify this abuse, Omar was, perhaps, inclined to abolish these proclamations; but being impracticable to do that, he devised an expedient, which Aboutaaleb suggested, to produce the same effect. Previous to that time, the measuring column, called the *Nilometer*,* had been divided into cubits of 24 digits; Omar abolished this, and substituted another in its place, which he erected in the island of Raouda; enacting that the 12 lower cubits should consist of 28 digits, instead of 24, while the upper remained of the usual number; hence, when the rise of the Nile appeared, by the column, to be 12 cubits, it was in fact 14; for these 12 cubits being each 4 digits too long, there was an excess of 48 digits, or 2 cubits. Therefore, when 14 cubits, the measure of a sufficient harvest, were proclaimed, the inundation was in fact at the height for plenty, and the multitude, always misled by words, never suspected the imposition. But this alteration could not escape the Arabian historians, who tell us the columns of the Said, or Upper Egypt, continued to be divided by 24 digits; that the height of 18 cubits (old style), was always injurious; and that 19 was very uncommon, and almost a prodigy.

Nothing therefore is more uncertain than the progressive changes here alledged, and which are rendered improbable by a well known fact, which is, that in the long period of 18 centuries,

* In Arabic, *Mekias*, or *Measure*.

the rise of the Nile never altered. How happens it, then, that it is so different at this day? How can it so soon have altered from 15 to 20 cubits, since the year 1473? This problem, in my opinion, is easily solved; not from physical changes, but other circumstances. It is not the Nile, but the column and measures which have varied. The mystery in which the Turks have enveloped the Mekias, has prevented the generality of travellers from discovering the truth; but Pococke, who got a sight of it in 1739, relates that the scale of cubits was inaccurate and unequal. He even says it seemed to him to be new, a circumstance which may lead us to suppose, that the Turks, in imitation of Omar, have made some recent alteration. In short, there is one fact which removes every doubt, for M. Niebuhr,* whom the world will not easily suspect of falsehood or mistake, having measured, in 1762, the marks of the inundation, on a wall at Djiza (Giza), found that, on the first of June, the Nile had fallen 24 French feet. But 24 feet, reduced to cubits, at the rate of 20 inches and a half each, give precisely 14 cubits 1 inch. It is true there still remains 18 days decrease; but by estimating that at half a cubit, agreeable to Pococke, we have only 14 cubits and a half, which answers exactly to the old calculation.

M. Savary advances another assertion to which, I cannot subscribe without restriction.—"Since I have been in *Egypt*," says he, Letter I. p. 15, "I have twice made the tour of Delta; I have "even

* *Voyage en Arabie*, tom. i. p. 102,

" even croſſed it by the canal of Menouf. The " river, though full to the brim, in the great " branches of Roſetta and Damietta, and thoſe " which run through the interior parts of the " country; only overflowed the land where it " lay low, or where banks had been raiſed to " ſtop its waters, and throw them over the rice " fields." Hence he concludes, " that the pre- " ſent poſition of the Delta is the beſt poſſible " for agriculture; ſince, ceaſing to be over- " flowed, this iſland has a yearly gain of the " three months during which the Thebais is in- " undated." It muſt be acknowledged that nothing can be more extraordinary than this gain. If the Delta has gained by being no longer overflowed, why was the inundation at all times ſo anxiouſly deſired? " This is ſupplied " by the banks." But the Delta muſt not be compared to the marſhes of the Seine. The water is only on a level with the land towards the ſea; every where elſe it is below the level, and the ſhore riſes as we get higher up the river. In ſhort, if I may give my opinion, I muſt declare that, when I went from Cairo to Roſetta, by the canal of Menouf, I obſerved, on the 26th, 27th, and 28th, of September, 1783, that, notwithſtanding the waters had decreaſed more than a fortnight, the country was ſtill partly under water, and ſtill diſcovered, in the places left dry, the traces of the inundation. What M. Savary obſerved, can, therefore, only be attributed to an indifferent inundation; nor ought we to ſuppoſe, either that the riſing has changed the ſtate of the Delta, when the bed

of the river itſelf has riſen, like the reſt of the country; or that the Egyptians can have no water but what is procured by wheels and pumps, not more expenſive than inadequate to the end.

It now remains to explain the difficulty of the eight cubits in the time of Mœris; and I cannot help ſuppoſing this ariſes from cauſes of the ſame nature. It appears that, ſubſequent to the time of this Prince, an alteration took place in the meaſures of the country, and one cubit was made into two. This conjecture is more probable ſince, in the time of Mœris, Egypt was not united into one kingdom; there were at leaſt three between Aſouan and the ſea. Seſoſtris, who was later than Mœris, conquered and united them. But, after this Prince, they were again divided, and this diviſion ſubſiſted till the reign of Pſammeticus. Such a change in the meaſures of Egypt correſponds exactly with the character of Seſoſtris, who effected a general revolution in the government, eſtabliſhed new laws, and a new adminiſtration, raiſed mounds and cauſeways, on which to build villages and towns, and dug ſo many canals, according to Herodotus *, that the Egyptians laid aſide the uſe of wheel-carriages.

It will alſo be proper to obſerve that the degrees of inundation are not the ſame throughout Egypt. On the contrary, a gradual diminution

* Herodotus, lib. 2. This circumſtance has greatly embarraſſed modern chronologiſts, who place Seſoſtris before Moſes, in whoſe time chariots were uſed in Egypt; but Herodotus is not to blame if his ſyſtem of chronology, the beſt of all antiquity, has not been underſtood.

tion takes place as the river approaches the ſea. At Aſouan (Syene), the overflow is more conſiderable, by one ſixth, than at Grand Cairo; and, when the depth of water, at this latter city, is twenty-ſeven feet, it is ſcarcely four at Roſetta and Damietta. The reaſon of this is, that beſides the quantity of water which the grounds abſorb as it flows, the river, confined in one ſingle bed, and within a narrow valley, riſes higher in the upper country; whereas, when it paſſes Cairo, being no longer obſtructed by the mountains, and ſeparating into a thouſand branches, it neceſſarily loſes in depth what it gains in ſurface.

The reader will doubtleſs ſee, from what has been ſaid, that writers have flattered themſelves too much in ſuppoſing they could fix the exact limits of the enlargement and riſe of the Delta. But, though I would throw aſide all illuſory circumſtances, I am far from denying the fact to be well founded; it is too plain from reaſon, and an examination of the country. The riſe of the ground appears to me demonſtrated by an obſervation on which little ſtreſs has hitherto been laid. Between Roſetta and Cairo, when the waters are low, as in the month of March, we may remark, as we aſcend the river, that the ſhore riſes gradually above the water, ſo that, if it overflows two feet at Roſetta, it will be from three to four at Faoua, and upwards of twelve at Cairo *. Now, by fair deduction from

* It would be curious to aſcertain in what proportion it continues up to Aſouan. Some Copts whom I queſtioned on the ſubject, aſſured me that it was much higher through all the Said than at Cairo.

from this fact, we may prove an increaſe by ſediment; for the layer of mud being in proportion to the thickneſs of the ſheets of water by which it is depoſited, muſt be more or leſs conſiderable as theſe are of a greater or leſs depth; and we have ſeen that a ſimilar gradation is obſervable between Aſouan and the ſea.

Again, the increaſe of the Delta appears in a ſtriking manner, by the form of Egypt, along the Mediterranean. When we conſider its figure on the map, we perceive, that the country, which is in the line of the river, and evidently formed of foreign materials, has aſſumed a ſemicircular ſhape, and that the ſhores of Arabia and Africa, on each ſide, have a direction towards the bottom of the Delta, which manifeſtly ſhew that this country was formerly a gulph, which in time, has been filled up.

This gathering is common with all rivers, and is to be accounted for in the ſame manner in all: the rain water, and the ſnow, deſcending from the mountains into the vallies, hurry inceſſantly along with them the earth they waſh away in their deſcent. The heavier parts, ſuch as pebbles and ſand, ſoon ſtop, unleſs forced along by a rapid current. But when the waters meet only with a fine and light earth, they carry away large quantities with the greateſt eaſe. The Nile meeting with ſuch a kind of earth, in Abyſſinia, and the interior parts of Africa, its waters are loaded, and its bed filled with it; nay, it is frequently ſo encumbered with this ſediment, as to be ſtraightened in its courſe. But, when the inundation reſtores to

it

it its natural force, it drives the mud which has accumulated towards the ſea, at the ſame time that it brings down more for the enſuing ſeaſon; and this, heaps up at its mouth, and forms ſhoals, where the declivity does not permit ſufficient action to the current, and where the ſea produces an equilibrium of reſiſtance. The ſtagnation, which neceſſarily follows, occaſions the groſſer particles, which till then had floated, to ſink, and this takes place more particularly in thoſe places where there is leaſt motion, as toward the ſhores, till the ſides become gradually enriched by the ſpoils of the upper country, and of the Delta itſelf; for, if the Nile brings ſoil from Abyſſinia, to add to the Thebais, it likewiſe takes from the Thebais to give the Delta, and from the Delta to conduct to the ſea. Wherever its waters have a rapid run it deſpoils the ſame territory it fertilizes. As we advance toward Cairo, when the river is low, the banks are worn ſteep, and crumbling in large flakes. The Nile, which undermines them, depriving their light earth of ſupport, it falls into the bed of the river, for when the water is high, the earth imbibes it; and when the ſun and drought return, it cracks and moulders away. Thus ſeveral canals are choaked up, and others enlarged, while the bed of the river continually riſes. This is the caſe with that which runs from Nadir to the branch of Damietta. This canal, originally dug by the hand of man, is in ſeveral places become as wide as the Seine. It ſupplies even the mother branch, which runs from Batn-el-Bakara to Nadir, and which

which is filling up so fast, that if not cleansed, it will soon become firm ground: the reason is, that the river inclines to the right line, in which it has the greatest force; wherefore it has preferred the Bolbitine, which was at first but an artificial canal, to the Canopic branch. (Herodot. lib. II.)

From this it naturally follows that the principal encroachment must be formed in the line of the most considerable mouths, and strongest current; and the appearance of the country is conformable with this theory. If we cast our eye on the map, we shall observe that the projection of the lands is chiefly in the direction of the branches of Rosetta and Damietta. The lateral and intermediate country consists entirely of lakes and morasses between the Continent and the sea, because the small canals, which issue there, have only produced an imperfect accumulation; for this mud and sediment cause a very slow rise: nor would this indeed ever elevate them above the water, without the addition of the more powerful agency of the sea, which perpetually raises the level of the low banks above its own waters. For the waves, beating on the shore, repel the sand and mud which they meet; their dashing afterwards collects that slender bank, and gives it an elevation which it never would have attained in still waters. This is manifest to every person who has ever observed the sea, on a low and changing shore; but the sea must have no current on the beach: for if it loses in those parts where it is in eddy, it gains in those where there is a current. When the shoals

ſhoals are at length formed on the level of the water, human induſtry ſoon improves them. But inſtead of ſaying it raiſes their level above the water, we ſhould ſay, it ſinks the level of the water, ſince the canals which are dug out, collect, in narrow channels, thoſe waters which were ſpread over a great extent of ground. The great number of canals may be the cauſe of variation in the degrees of the inundation; for if there be many, and thoſe deep ones, the water will run off quicker, and riſe leſs; if there be few, and thoſe ſhallow, the contrary will happen.

There doubtleſs are many obſervations to make, or to reconſider, in this country; but, they are attended with great difficulties, to overcome which, much time, expence, and addreſs are neceſſary; and in many reſpects, the attendant obſtacles are even more inſuperable than the fundamental. Baron de Tott found the truth of this very lately, as to the Nilometar. In vain he endeavoured to ſeduce the guardians; in vain he gave and promiſed ſequins to the cryers, in order to obtain the exact heights of the Nile; their contradictory reports proved either their deceit, or ignorance, It will be obſerved, perhaps, that meaſuring columns might be erected in private houſes; but however ſimple in theory, they are impracticable: they would expoſe to too ſerious dangers. Even the natural curioſity of the Franks, every day renders the Turks more ſuſpicious. They are perſuaded we have deſigns on their country; and the invaſions of the Ruſſians, added to popular prejudice, ſtrengthens

ens theſe doubts. It is generally ſuppoſed, at this moment, throughout their empire, that the predicted hour is arrived, when the power and religion of the Muſſulmen are to be deſtroyed, and that the *Yellow King* is coming to eſtabliſh a new empire, &c. &c. But it is now time to return to our ſubject.

The ſeaſon of the inundation, is fixed preciſely to the 19th of June, although the firſt inſtant of it cannot be ſo exactly determined as the Copts wiſh to do. Its gradual increaſe, ſo unlike the ſudden ſwelling of our rivers; its diverſities, ſometimes feeble, ſometimes ſtrong, and ſometimes even entirely fails; (a very rare caſe, though it has more than once happened): all theſe particulars are too well known to be repeated. It is alſo known that the cauſes of this phenomenon, which were an enigma to all the ancients, but Democritus, are no longer ſo to the Europeans. Travellers having informed us that Abyſſinia and the adjacent parts of Africa, are deluged with rain in May, June, and July, it has been with reaſon, concluded, that it muſt be theſe rains, which, by the ſituation of the country, through which run a thouſand rivers, collect in the ſame valley, direct their courſe to diſtant ſhores, and preſent the ſtupendous ſight of a maſs of water, which employs three months in draining off. We leave to Grecian naturaliſts their action of the northerly or Eteſian winds, which, by a pretended preſſure, ſtem the courſe of the river; it is aſtoniſhing that even they ſhould ever have admitted this ſolution, for the wind, acting only on the ſurface

ſurface of the water, can never impede the inferior maſs contrary to the laws of gravity. In vain ſome moderns allege the example of the Mediterranean, which, from eaſterly winds, leaves dry the coaſt of Syria, a foot, or a foot and a half, to gain as much on thoſe of Spain and Provence, on which weſterly winds have the oppoſite effect; there is no compariſon to be made between a ſloping ſea, and a river; between the vaſt ſurface of the Mediterranean, and that of the Nile; between twenty-ſix feet and eighteen inches.

CHAP IV.

Of the Winds and the Phænomena attending them.

THE northerly winds, blowing at ſtated periods, anſwer a more certain and effectual purpoſe; that of carrying into Abyſſinia prodigious volumes of clouds. From April to July we ſee theſe inceſſantly aſcending to the ſouth, and might be ſometimes tempted to expect rain from them; but this parched country requeſts in vain from them a bleſſing which it is to receive under a different form. It never rains in the Delta in ſummer, and but rarely, and in ſmall quantities, during the whole year. The year 1761, obſerved by M. Niebuhr, was an extraordinary caſe, which is ſtill often mentioned.

The accidents occaſioned by the rains in Lower Egypt, in which many villages, built with earth, crumbled to pieces, afford a ſufficient proof that this abundance of water is there looked upon as very uncommon. It muſt be alſo obſerved, that it rains ſtill leſs as you aſcend towards the Said. Thus, more rain falls at Alexandria and Roſetta than at Cairo, and at Cairo than at Miniah, and is almoſt a prodigy at Djirdja. The inhabitants of humid countries, cannot conceive how it is poſſible for a country to ſubſiſt without rain. When rain falls in Egypt and Paleſtine, there is a general joy among the people: they collect in the ſtreets, ſing, are all in motion, and ſhout, *ya allah! ya mobarek!* that is to ſay, O God! O Bleſſed! &c. But in Egypt, beſides the quantity of water which the earth imbibes during the inundation, the dews which fall in the ſummer might anſwer the purpoſes of vegetation. The water-melons afford a remarkable proof of this; for though they have often nothing under them but a dry duſt, yet their leaves are always freſh. Theſe dews, as well as the rains, are more copious near the ſea, and leſs conſiderable in proportion to their diſtance from it; but differ from the latter by being more abundant in ſummer than in winter. At Alexandria, after ſunſet, in the month of April, the clothes expoſed to the air, and the terraces are ſoaked, as if it had rained. Theſe dews are more or leſs plentiful, according to the prevailing wind. The ſoutherly and the ſoutheaſterly produce none; the north wind a great deal, and the weſterly

ſtill

ſtill more. Theſe varieties are eaſily explained, by obſerving that the two former blow from the deſerts of Africa and Arabia, which do not afford a drop of water; while the northerly and weſterly winds, on the contrary, convey over Egypt the vapours from the Mediterranean, which the firſt croſſes, and the other traverſes lengthways. I find, on comparing my obſervations on this ſubject in Provence, in Syria, and in Egypt, with thoſe of M. Niebuhr in Arabia and Bombay, that this relative poſition of the ſeas and continents is the cauſe of the various qualities of one and the ſame wind, producing rain in one country, while dry in another; a remark which not a little deranges the ſyſtems of ancient and modern aſtrologers as to the influence of the planets.

Another ſingular phenomenon, is the periodical return of each wind, and its appropriation, ſo to expreſs it, to certain ſeaſons of the year. Egypt and Syria preſent, in this reſpect, a regularity worthy of notice.

In Egypt, when the ſun approaches to Cancer, the winds, which before blew from the eaſt, change to the north, and continue in that point. In June they always blow from the north and north-weſt; this is therefore the proper ſeaſon for going up the Levant, and a veſſel may expect to anchor in Cyprus, or at Alexandria, the fourteenth, nay, ſometimes the eleventh day, after her departure from Marſeilles. The winds continue northerly in July, but vary ſometimes toward the weſt, and ſometimes toward the eaſt. About the end of July, all Auguſt, and half of

September, they remain invariably in the north, and are moderate; briſker in the day, however, and weaker at night. At this period an univerſal calm prevails on the Mediterranean, ſo that ſhips would be ſeventy or eighty days in returning to France.

Towards the end of September, when the ſun repaſſes the line, the winds return to the eaſt; and, though not fixed, blow more regularly from that than any other point except the north. Veſſels return during this ſeaſon, (October and part of November,) to return to Europe; and the run to Marſeilles is from 30 to 35 days. As the ſun approaches the other tropic, the winds become more changeable and tempeſtuous; they generally blow from the north; the north-weſt, and weſt, in which points they continue during the months of December, January, and February, which is winter in Egypt, as well as with us. The vapours of the Mediterranean, condenſed by the coldneſs of the atmoſphere, deſcend in miſts and rains. About the end of February and in March, when the ſun returns towards the equator, the winds are more frequently ſoutherly than at any other ſeaſon. During this laſt month, and that of April, the ſouth eaſterly, ſouth, and ſouth-weſterly winds prevail; and at times the weſt, north, and eaſt; indeed the eaſt wind is moſt prevalent about the end of April; and during May it divides with the north the empire of the ſea, and renders the paſſage to France ſtill more expeditious than at the other equinox.

Of

Of the hot Wind, called Kamsin.

THE ſoutherly winds, we have juſt mentioned, are known in Egypt by the general name of *winds of fifty (days)*, in Arabic, *kamſin*; but the *k* is the ſame with the Spaniſh *jota*, or the German *ch*; not that they laſt fifty days intermittingly, but becauſe they are frequent in the fifty days preceding and following the equinox. Travellers mention them under the denomination of *poiſonous* winds, or, more correctly, *hot winds of the deſart*. Such, in fact, is their quality; and their heat is at times ſo exceſſive, that it is difficult to form any idea of its violence without having felt it; but it may be compared to the heat of a large oven at the moment of drawing out the bread. When theſe winds blow, the atmoſphere aſſumes an alarming appearance. The ſky, at other times ſo clear, in this climate, becomes dark and heavy; the ſun loſes his ſplendour, and aſſumes a violet colour. The air though not cloudy, is grey and thick, and is filled with a ſubtle duſt, which penetrates every where. This wind, always light and rapid, is not at firſt very hot, but it increaſes in heat in proportion as it continues. All animated bodies ſoon perceive it, by the change it produces. The lungs, which a too rarefied air no longer expands, are contracted, and painful. Breathing is ſhort and difficult, the ſkin parched and dry, and the body conſumed by an internal heat. In vain is recourſe had to large draughts of water; nothing can reſtore perſpiration. Nor can coolneſs be found; all bodies in which

it is uſual to find it, deceive the hand that touches them. Marble, iron, water, though the ſun no longer appears, are hot. The ſtreets are forſaken, and the dead ſilence of night univerſally reigns. The inhabitants of towns and villages ſhut themſelves up in their houſes, and thoſe of the deſert in their tents, or in pits they dig in the earth, where they wait the iſſue of this deſtructive heat. It uſually continues three days; but if beyond that time it is inſupportable. Woe to the traveller whom this wind ſurprizes far from ſhelter; he muſt ſuffer all its dreadful effects, which are ſometimes mortal. The danger is moſt imminent when it blows in ſqualls; for then the rapidity of the wind encreaſes the heat to ſuch a degree, as to occaſion ſudden death. This death is ſuffocation; the lungs being empty, are convulſed, the circulation diſordered, and the whole maſs of blood driven by the heart towards the head and breaſt; whence that hæmorrhage at the noſe and mouth which follows death. This wind is eſpecially fatal to perſons of a plethoric habit, and thoſe in whom fatigue has deſtroyed the tone of the muſcles and the veſſels. The corpſe continues a long time warm, ſwells turns blue, and is eaſily ſeparated; all which are ſymptoms of that putrid fermentation which takes place in animal bodies when the humours become ſtagnant. Theſe accidents may be avoided, by ſtopping the noſe and mouth with handkerchiefs; an efficacious method likewiſe is that practiſed by the camels, which bury their

their noſes in the ſand, and keep them there till the ſquall is exhauſted.

Extreme aridity is another quality of this wind; which is ſuch, that water ſprinkled on the floor evaporates in a few minutes. By this extreme dryneſs, it withers and ſtrips all the plants, and, by exhaling too ſuddenly the emanations from animal bodies, criſps the ſkin, ſhuts the pores, and produces that feveriſh heat which is the invariable effect of ſuppreſſed perſpiration.

Theſe ſcorching winds are not confined to Egypt; they are likewiſe felt in Syria; more frequently, however, near the ſea, and in the deſert, than on the mountains. M. Niebuhr met with them in Arabia, at Bombay, and in the Diarbekir; they are alſo felt in Perſia, in other parts of Africa, and even in Spain; every where their effects are alike, but their direction varies according to the ſituation of the country. In Egypt, the moſt violent blow from the ſouth-ſouth-weſt; at Mecca, from the eaſt; at Surat, from the north; at Baſſora, from the north-weſt; from the weſt at Bagdad; and in Syria from the ſouth-eaſt. Theſe varieties, which appear embarraſſing at firſt ſight, on reflection, furniſh the means of explaining the enigma. We find, on examination, that theſe winds always proceed from deſert continents; and, indeed, it is natural to ſuppoſe that the air which covers the immenſe plains of Lybia and Arabia, where there are neither rivulets, lakes, nor foreſts, but ſcorched by the rays of a burning ſun, the violence of which is ſtill more increaſed by the reflecting ſand, ſhould acquire a prodigious degree

degree of heat and aridity; and if by any cauſe it is ſet in motion, it cannot but carry with it the deſtructive qualities it has imbibed; ſo true is it that theſe qualities are owing to the action of the ſun on the ſands that theſe ſame winds produce not the ſame effects at every ſeaſon. In Egypt, for inſtance, I am aſſured, that the ſouthern winds in December and January are as cold as thoſe from the north; and the reaſon is, that the ſun, having reached the ſouthern tropic, no longer ſcorches the northern parts of Africa, and that Abyſſinia, which is extremely mountainous, is covered with ſnow. The ſun muſt approach the equator to produce theſe phenomena. From a ſimilar cauſe, the ſouth wind has much leſs effect in Cyprus, where it arrives cooled by the vapours of the Mediterranean. That from the north retains its characteriſtic qualities in this iſland, where the inhabitants complain that its heat is inſupportable in ſummer, while it is freezing cold in winter; this evidently ariſes from the ſtate of Aſia Minor, which in ſummer is ſcorched, and in winter covered with ice. In fact, this ſubject offers a multitude of problems, exciting the curioſity of the naturaliſt.—Would it not, for example, be intereſting to underſtand,

1ſt, Whence ariſes this connection of the ſeaſons; and the progreſs of the ſun, with the various winds, and the points from which they blow?

2dly, Why, through the Mediterranean, does the wind moſt generally blow from the north; inſomuch,

infomuch, that we may fay it blows from that point nine months out of twelve?

3dly, Why do eaſterly winds blow ſo regularly after the equinoxes; and why are the winds, in general, higher at this period?

4thly, Why are dews more abundant in ſummer than in winter; and why, ſince the clouds are cauſed by the evaporation of the ſea, and that evaporation is more abundant in ſummer than in winter, why, notwithſtanding, are there more clouds in winter than ſummer?

5thly, In fine, why is rain ſo rare in Egypt, and why do the clouds rather gather in Abyſſinia?

But let us haſten to complete our obſervations on the phyſical ſtate of this country.

CHAP. V.

Of the Climate and Air.

THE climate of Egypt is juſtly reckoned extremely hot, ſince in July and Auguſt, Reaumur's thermometer ſtands, in the moſt temperate apartments, at 24 and 25 degrees above the freezing point, or 86 and 88 degrees of Fahrenheit's ſcale. In the Said, it is ſtill higher, though I cannot ſpeak preciſely in that reſpect. The height of the ſun, which in ſummer, nearly reaches the zenith, is doubtleſs a primary cauſe of this heat; but when we conſider, that, in other countries, under the ſame latitude, the heat

heat is leſs, we may conclude there exiſts a ſecondary cauſe, equally powerful with the former, and this perhaps, is, the country being ſo little higher than the level of the ſea. On this account, two ſeaſons only ſhould be diſtinguiſhed in Egypt; the ſpring and ſummer, or, the cool and the hot. The latter continues from March to November; and even from the end of February, the ſun is not ſupportable, for an European, at nine o'clock in the morning. During all this ſeaſon, the air is inflamed, the ſky ſparkling, and the heat intolerable to all unaccuſtomed to it. The body ſweats profuſely, even under the lighteſt dreſs, and in a ſtate of the moſt profound repoſe; and this perſpiration is ſo neceſſary, that, the ſlighteſt ſuppreſſion of it is ſerious; inſomuch, that, the common ſalute, "How do you do?" ſhould be in Egypt, "How do you ſweat?" The departure of the ſun, in ſome degree, moderates theſe heats. The vapours from the earth ſoaked by the Nile, and thoſe from the weſt, and north-weſt winds, abſorbing the fire diſperſed throughout the atmoſphere, occaſion an agreeable freſhneſs, and even piercing cold, if we may believe the natives, and ſome European merchants; but the Egyptians, half naked, and accuſtomed to perſpire, ſhiver at the leaſt coolneſs. The thermometer, which, at the loweſt, in the month of February, ſtands at the 8th or 9th degree of Reamur's ſcale, above the freezing point, enables us to ſay with certainty, that ſnow, and hail, are phænomena which no Egyptian has ſeen in fifty years. As for European merchants, their ſenſibility is owing

ing to their improper uſe of furs, which they carry ſo far, that, in winter, they have frequently two or three coverings of foxes ſkin; and, even in ſummer, retain the ermine or *petit gris*. They plead the chillineſs they feel in the ſhade, as an indiſpenſable reaſon; and indeed, the north and weſterly currents of air, which almoſt continually prevail, occaſion a pretty conſiderable coolneſs out of the ſun; but the ſecret and true reaſon is, that the peliſſe is to be conſidered as the lace of Turkey, the favourite object of luxury; it is the mark of opulence, and the etiquette of dignity; for the inveſtiture of important offices is always accompanied with the preſent of a peliſſe; as much as to ſay of him to whom they give it, he is now ſo eminent, he need give himſelf no trouble, but perſpire at his eaſe.

It might naturally be ſuppoſed that Egypt, from theſe heats, and its wet and marſhy condition for three months, muſt be an unhealthy country; this was my firſt idea; and, when I ſaw, at Cairo, the houſes of our merchants ranged along the Kalidj, where the water is in a ſtagnate ſtate till April, I made no doubt that the exhalations thence ariſing, muſt produce many maladies; but experience proves the fallacy of this; the vapours of the ſtagnant waters, ſo fatal in Cyprus, and Alexandretta, are not ſo in Egypt. This I imagine to be owing to the natural dryneſs of the air, to the proximity of Africa and Arabia, which inceſſantly draw off the humidity, and the perpetual currents of wind, which meet with no obſtacle.

This

This aridity is such, that flesh meat exposed, even in summer, to the north wind, does not putrify, but dries, and becomes hard as wood. In the deserts, dead carcases are found dried thus, which are so light, that a man may easily lift with one hand the entire body of a camel; though it must be remarked, that the air on the sea coast is much less dry than higher up the country: Thus, at Alexandria, and Rosetta, iron cannot be exposed four-and-twenty hours to the air, without rusting.

The air, besides this drying quality, appears to be strongly impregnated with salts, the proofs of which are every where apparent. The stones are corroded by natrum, and in moist places, long crystallizations of it are to be found, which might be mistaken for salt-petre. The wall of the Jesuits garden, at Cairo, built with earth and bricks, is every where covered with a crust of this, as thick as a crown-piece; and when this garden has been overflowed by the Kalidj, the ground, after being drained, appears sparkling on every side with white crystals, which certainly were not brought by the water, since it shows no sign of salt, either to the taste, or in distillation.

It is, doubtless, this property of the air, and the earth, which, added to the heat, gives vegetation an activity almost incredible in our cold climates. Wherever plants have water, the rapidity of their growth is prodigious. Whoever has been at Cairo, or Rosetta, knows, that the species of gourd called *kara*, will, in twenty-four hours, send out shoots near four inches long;

long; but it is remarkable, that this ſoil appears extremely unfavourable to all exotics. Foreign plants degenerate rapidly: which is proved by daily experience. Our merchants are obliged every year to renew their ſeeds, and to ſend to Malta for their cauliflowers, beet-root, carrots, and ſalſify: theſe, when ſown, ſucceed very well at firſt; but if they ſow again the ſeed they produce, the plants run up all and weak. This is alſo the caſe with apricots, pears, and peaches, at Roſetta. The vegetation ſeems too violent for ſpungy and pulpy fruits, which ſhould be gradually inured to the ſoil and climate, by the arts of culture.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Inhabitants of Egypt.

IN conſequence of thoſe revolutions which all nations have more or leſs experienced, there are few countries which have preſerved their original and primitive inhabitants pure and unmixed. Through the world, the ſame avarice and ambition which incite individuals to encroach on each other's property, have inſtigated nations one againſt another; and the conſequence of this claſhing of intereſts and powers, has been to introduce into ſtates a foreign conqueror, who, now an inſolent uſurper, has deſpoiled the vanquiſhed nation of the domain nature granted them; and now, a more timid or more civilized invader, has contented himſelf with ſha-

ring in advantages refuſed him by his native ſoil. We ſometimes ſee different races of inhabitants ſettling themſelves in the ſame country, who, adopting the ſame manners and intereſts, have united in the moſt intimate alliances; but more generally we find them divided by political or religious prejudices, and remaining perpetually diſtinct. In the firſt caſe, the different races, loſing their diſtinguiſhing characters, have formed an homogeneous people, among whom no traces of the revolution can be traced; in the ſecond, living diſtinct, their perpetuated differences are become a monument which has outlived ages, and which, in ſome caſes may ſupply the ſilence of hiſtory.

This is the caſe with Egypt: deprived, three-and-twenty centuries ago, of her natural proprietors, ſhe has ſeen her fertile fields ſucceſſively a prey to Perſians, Macedonians, Romans, Greeks, Arabs, Georgians, and, at length, to thoſe Tartars, diſtinguiſhed by the name of Ottoman Turks. Several of them have left veſtiges of their tranſient poſſeſſion; but as they have been blended in ſucceſſion, they have been ſo confounded as to render it very difficult to diſcriminate their reſpective characters. Still, however, in the inhabitants of Egypt, four principal races, of different origin may be traced.

The firſt, and moſt general, is the Arabs, which may be again divided into three claſſes. Firſt, the poſterity of thoſe who, on the conqueſt of Egypt by Amrou, in the year 640, came from the Hedjaz, and every part of Arabia, to ſettle in this country. Famous for its fruit-

fruitfulneſs, every one was anxious to poſſeſs lands in it, and the Delta was ſoon overſpread with foreigners, to the prejudice of the vanquiſhed Greeks. This firſt race appears among the preſent claſs of fellahs, or huſbandmen, and artizans, who ſtill retain ſome characteriſtic features of their anceſtors, but are taller and ſtouter, the natural effect of a more plentiful nouriſhment than that of the deſerts. In general, the peaſants reach the height of 5 feet 4 inches, and many among them attain to 5 feet 6 or 7 inches; which is near 5 feet 8, or 5 feet 10 or 11 inches, Engliſh meaſure; the French foot (meant thro' this work,) being to the Engliſh as 144 to 135. They are muſcular, though not fleſhy and corpulent, as men will be who are hardened to fatigue. Their ſkin, tanned by the ſun, is almoſt black, but their countenances have nothing diſagreeable. The greateſt part of them have fine oval heads, large projecting foreheads, and, under a dark eyebrow, a black, ſunken, but brilliant eye; the noſe large, though not aquiline; well ſhaped mouths, and univerſally fine teeth. The inhabitants of great towns, are more mixed, and have a leſs uniform and marked phyſiognomy. Thoſe of the villages, on the contrary, making no alliances but in their own families, have more general and uniform characteriſtics, and ſomething of ferocity in their air, which originates in the paſſions of a mind ſoured by the perpetual war and tyranny with which they are ſurrounded.

A ſecond claſs of Arabs is the Africans, or Occidentals, (in Arabic *magarbe*, the plural of

magrebi, weſtern,) who have arrived at different periods, and under different chiefs, and united to the former; like them, they are deſcended from the Muſſulmen conquerors, who expelled the Greeks from Mauritania; they alſo exerciſe agriculture and trades; but are more eſpecially numerous in the Said, where they have villages, and even diſtinct ſovereigns of their own.

The third claſs is that of the *Bedouins*, (in Arabic *bedaoui*, formed of *bid*, deſert, country without habitations,) or inhabitants of the deſerts, known to the ancients by the name of *Scenites*, which means dwellers in tents. Some of theſe, diſperſed in families, dwell in rocks, caverns, ruins, and ſequeſtered places where there is water; others, collected in tribes, encamp under low and ſmoaky tents, and ſpend their lives in perpetual journeyings, at times in the deſert, at other times on the banks of the river; having no other attachment to the ſoil than what ariſes from their own ſafety, or the ſubſiſtence of their flocks. Tribes of them arrive every year after the inundation, from the centre of Africa, to profit by the fertility of the country, and in the ſpring retire into the deſert; others reſide conſtantly in Egypt, where they farm lands, which they ſow, and annually change. All of them obſerve ſtated limits among themſelves, which they never paſs, on pain of war. They all lead nearly the ſame courſe of life, and have the ſame cuſtoms and manners. Poor and ignorant, the Bedouins preſerve an original character diſtinct from the neighbouring nations. Pacific in their camp, they are every where elſe in

in an habitual ſtate of hoſtility. The huſbandmen, whom they pillage, deteſt them; the travellers, whom they rob, ſpeak ill of them; and the Turks who fear them, endeavour to corrupt and divide them. It is calculated that the various tribes of them in Egypt would form a body of thirty thouſand horſemen; but theſe are ſo diſperſed and diſunited, that they are conſidered as vagabonds and robbers.

The Copts form the ſecond race of inhabitants, called in Arabic, *el Kobt*. Several families of theſe are in the Delta; but the greater number dwell in the Said, where they in ſome inſtances occupy whole villages. Hiſtory and tradition atteſt their deſcent from the people whom the Arabs conquered, that is, from that mixture of Egyptians, Perſians, and particularly Greeks, who, under the Ptolemies and Conſtantines, were ſo long maſters of Egypt. They differ from the Arabs in their religion, which is Chriſtianity; but they are again diſtinguiſhed from other Chriſtians by their ſect, being Eutychians. Their adherence to this hereſy, has brought perſecutions on them on the part of the other Greeks, which has occaſioned an irreconcileable breach. When the Arabs conquered the country, they took advantage of theſe animoſities, to enfeeble both. The Copts have, however, expelled their rivals; and, as they have been always intimately acquainted with the interior parts of the country, they are now the depoſitaries of the regiſters of the lands and tribes. Under the name of *writers*, they are the intendants, ſecretaries, and collectors of go-

vernment, at Cairo. Theſe writers, whom the Turks deſpiſe, and whom the peaſants hate and oppreſs, form a kind of ſeparate body, the head of which is the writer to the principal Bey. He diſpoſes of all places in that department, which, according to the nature of the Turkiſh government, he confers on the beſt bidder. It is alledged that the name of *Copts*, is taken from the city of *Coptos*, whither it has been aſſerted they retired from the tyranny of the Greeks; but I am inclined to believe it has a more natural and ancient origin. The Arabic term *Kobti*, a Copt, ſeems to me an evident corruption of the Greek word *Ai-goupti-os*, an Egyptian: for the *y* was pronounced *ou*, among the Greeks formerly, and the Arabs having neither *p* nor *g* before *a*, *o*, *u*, always ſubſtitute *k* and *b* for theſe letters; the Copts are then properly the remains of the ancient Egyptians; and this is the more probable, ſince we find them in the Said before the time of Diocleſian, and it is certain the Greeks were leſs numerous in the Said than the Delta. Still farther, if we conſider the diſtinguiſhing features of this race, we ſhall find them all characterized by a ſort of yellowiſh duſky complexion, neither Grecian nor Arabian; they have all a puffed viſage, ſwoln eyes, flat noſes, and thick lips, in ſhort the very countenance of a Mulatto. I was firſt tempted to aſcribe this to the climate; for the countenance of the negroes repreſents exactly that ſtate of contraction which our faces aſſume when ſtrongly affected by heat. The eye-brows are knit, the cheeks riſe, the eye-lids contracted, and the mouth is diſtorted.

diſtorted. This contraction, to which the features are perpetually expoſed in the hot climates of the negroes, is the peculiar characteriſtic of their countenance. Exceſſive cold, wind and ſnow has the ſame effect, and thus we diſcover the ſame faces among the Tartars; while, in the temperate zones, where theſe extremes are unknown, the features are lengthened, the eyes leſs prominent, and the countenance more expanded. But when I ſaw the ſphynx, I could not help thinking that monſter furniſhed the true ſolution of the enigma: when I obſerved that its features were preciſely thoſe of a negro, I recollected the remarkable paſſage of Herodotus, where he ſays, "For my part, I believe "the Colchi to be a colony of Egyptians, be"cauſe, like them, they have black ſkins and "frizzled hair:" that is, that the ancient Egyptians were real negroes, of the ſame ſpecies with the natives of Africa; and although, after mixing for ſo many ages with the Greeks and Romans, they have loſt the intenſity of their firſt colour, yet they ſtill retain ſtrong marks of their original conformation.

This remark may be carried ſtill farther; and it may be laid down as a general principle, that the features are a kind of monument which, in many caſes, elucidate and aſcertain the teſtimony of hiſtory, concerning the origin of nations. Among us, a diſtance of nine hundred years has not been able to efface thoſe marks which diſtinguiſhed the inhabitants of Gaul from thoſe northern invaders, who, under Charles the Groſs, ſettled themſelves in our richeſt provinces.

Travellers

Travellers from Normandy to Denmark, are aſtoniſhed at the extreme reſemblance of the inhabitants of thoſe two countries, which ſtill ſubſiſts, notwithſtanding the diſtance of times and places. The ſame remark may be made as to Franconia and Burgundy; and throughout England, France, and every other country, the ſame proofs of emigration are to be traced in the features of the inhabitants. Do not the Jews, wherever they reſide, carry with them diſtinguiſhing marks which cannot be effaced? In thoſe ſtates where the nobility have deſcended from a foreign people, introduced by conqueſt, if thoſe nobles form no alliance with the natives, they will always remain diſtinct in their perſons and features. The Calmuc race is, for this reaſon, extremely diſtinguiſhable in India; and were we to examine attentively the various nations of Europe, and the North of Aſia, we might poſſibly diſcover many ſimilarities which have been long ſince forgot.

But as to Egypt: this hiſtorical fact gives an intereſting ſubject of reflection to philoſophy. How are we amazed when we ſee the preſent barbariſm and ignorance of the Copts, ſprung from the profound genius of the Egyptians, and the brilliant imagination of the Greeks; when we conſider that to the race of negroes, at this moment our ſlaves, and the objects of our extreme contempt, we owe our arts, ſciences, and even the uſe of ſpeech itſelf; and when we recollect that, amidſt thoſe nations who call themſelves the friends of liberty and humanity, the moſt barbarous of ſlaveries is juſtified; nay

that

that it is even a problem whether the underſtanding of negroes is of the ſame ſpecies with that of white people!

Language is another monument whoſe indications are equally juſt and inſtructive. That formerly ſpoken by the Copts fully confirms this obſervation. On the one hand, the ſhape of their letters, and the greater number of their words, proves that the Greeks during the thouſand years they continued in Egypt, have left deep marks of their power and influence; but, on the other hand, the Coptic alphabet contains five letters, and the language a number of words, which may be conſidered as the remains of the ancient Egyptian. Theſe words, critically examined, have a ſenſible analogy with the dialects of the ancient neighbouring nations, ſuch as Arabs, Ethiopians, Syrians, and even the inhabitants of the banks of the Euphrates; nor can it be denied that all theſe languages are derived from one common ſource. For more than three centuries, that of the Copts has fallen into diſuſe. The Arabs, diſdaining the language of the nations they ſubdued, impoſed on them, along with their yoke, the neceſſity of learning that of their conquerors. This obligation became a law, when, about the end of the firſt century of the Hejira, the Caliph Waled I. prohibited the uſe of Greek throughout all his empire. From that time the Arabic became general; and the other languages, confined to books, ſubſiſted only for the learned, who neglected them. Such has been the fate of the Coptic; the prieſts and monks no longer under-

underſtand it, in their ſcriptures and religious books where alone it exiſts; and in Egypt, as in Syria, every perſon whether Mahometan or Chriſtian, ſpeaks Arabic, nor is any other language underſtood in their countries.

Some important remarks in geography and hiſtory, here occur. Travellers, in deſcribing the countries they have ſeen, frequently find it neceſſary, to employ ſome words of the language; particularly in mentioning the proper names of nations, men, cities, rivers, and the natural productions peculiar to each country; from hence this inconvenience has ariſen, that by conveying the words of one language in the characters of another, they have ſo diſigured them, as to render them difficult to be known. This has been remarkably the caſe with reſpect to the countries of which I treat; and, in books of travels and geography, the conſequence has been an incredible and inexplicable confuſion. An Arab, who ſhould learn French, would not know ten words of his own language in our maps, and, when we ourſelves have learnt Arabic, we feel the ſame inconvenience. The cauſes of this are various.

Firſt, their ignorance of the Arabic language, and eſpecially of the pronunciation; which occaſions their ear, unaccuſtomed to foreign ſounds, to make a vicious compariſon of them with thoſe of their own language, even the learned Pococke, notwithſtanding his great knowledge of oriental books, could never want an interpreter; and very lately Vonhaven, Profeſſor of Arabic in Denmark, could not underſtand the

ſalam

ſalam alai com (good-morrow) when he arrived in Egypt; and his young companion Forſkal, at the end of one year, had made much greater progreſs than he had.

Again, ſeveral ſounds, have nothing analogous to them in the language in which they attempt to convey them. This the French experience every day in the *th* of the Engliſh, and in the *jota* of the Spaniards. Without hearing, it is impoſſible for any man to form an idea of theſe; but this difficulty is ſtill more in the Arabic, in which there are three vowels, and ſeven or eight conſonants, to which Europeans are entire ſtrangers. How then is it poſſible to repreſent them, ſo as to retain their genuine ſound, and not confound them with others altogether different?

A third ſource of confuſion has been raiſed by writers who have compiled books and maps. In gathering their information from all the Europeans who have travelled in the Eaſt, they have adopted the orthography of proper names, ſuch as they found it in the author they conſulted, without conſidering that the different nations of Europe, though they all uſe Roman characters, ſound them differently.—For inſtance, the *u* of the Italians is not the *u* of the French, but *ou*. Their *gh* is ſounded like *gu*, and their *c*, *tch*: hence a ſeeming diverſity of names, which are, in fact, the ſame. Thus, that what ſhould be written in French *chaik*, or *chek*, is variouſly expreſſed by *ſchek*, *ſkekh*, *ſchech*, *ſciek*, according as the word has been taken from Engliſh, German, or Italian writers, with

with whom *ſh*, *ſch*, *ſc*, are reſpectively ſounded like our *che*. A Pole would write *ſzech*, and a Spaniard *chej*. This difference of the final *j*, *ch*, and *kh*, ariſes from the Arabic letter being the Spaniſh *jota*, or German *ch* the ſound of which is unknown to the Engliſh, French, or Italians. Hence the Engliſh write *Rooda*, for the name of the iſland, which the Italians write *Ruda*, and which we, like the Arabs, ſhould pronounce *Rouda*; Pococke writes *harammee* for *harami*, a robber; and Niebuhr *djebel* for *djebel*, a mountain; that Danville, who has made great uſe of Engliſh memoirs, writes *Sham* for *Cham*, Syria; *wadi* for *ouadi*, a valley; and a thouſand other inſtances.

This has introduced a great confuſion in orthography; and, if it be not corrected, the ſame uncertainty will prevail in modern writers which we ſo juſtly complain of in the ancients, who, by their ignorance of the barbarous languages, and their rage for accommodating the ſounds to the taſte of the Greeks and Romans, have deſtroyed every trace of the original names, and deprived us of an invaluable method of diſcovering the ancient ſtate of things in that now ſubſiſting. The French is ſubject to the ſame delicacy; it diſfigures every thing, and our ear rejects, as barbarous, whatever it is not accuſtomed to. It would not do to introduce new characters; but it might not be amiſs to approach, as much as poſſible, the ſound of thoſe we would expreſs, and repreſent them by thoſe of our letters which are beſt adapted, adding ſome certain marks to them. Were this done by

by every nation, there would be but one nomenclature, and this would be a first step towards an invention, which is every day more wanted, and more easy to effect, a *general alphabet*, adapted to all languages, at least to European. In the course of my work I avoid as much as possible Arabic words; but when under the necessity, of introducing them, let not the reader be surprised, if I often depart from the orthography of the generality of travellers. Judging from what they have written, we should be led to think, that not one of them has known even the true pronunciation of Arabic, or how to convey the sounds of that language in our characters. But to return to the subject.

A third class of inhabitants are the Turks, who are the masters of the country, or at least answer that title. The name of *Turk*, was not originally peculiar to the nation to which it is now applied: it denoted, all the hordes in general, dispersed to the east, and even to the north, of the Caspian Sea, as far as Lake Aral, over those vast countries which from them are denominated *Tourk-estan;* which is a Persian word, signifying *country*, and is used as a termination to proper names; as in *Arab-estan*, *Frank-estan*, and we may add *Kourd-estan*, and *Indo-stan*, &c. These are the same people, who were distinguished by the ancient Greeks by the names of Parthians, Massagetæ and even of Scythians, for which we have substituted that of Tartars. A nation of wandering shepherds, like the Bedouin Arabs; they have been in every age, brave and formidable warriors. Neither Cyrus

nor Alexander could ſubdue them. But the Arabs were more fortunate. About eighty years after Mahomet, they invaded, by order of the Caliph Waled I. the country of the Turks, and, impoſed their religion on them: they even obliged them to pay tribute. But the empire falling into confuſion, the rebel governors had recourſe to their aid to reſiſt the power of the Caliphs, and they took a concern in every conteſt; nor were they long in acquiring the aſcendant this might be expected to give them: for, continually encamped, and arms in their hands, they became a warlike people, and initiated in every military manœuvre. Like the Bedouins, they live in tribes, or camps, called, in their language, *ordou*, of which we have made *horde*; and theſe tribes, whether allied or at variance, according to their ſeveral intereſts, were perpetually at war. Hence, in their hiſtory, ſeveral nations, all called Turks, are alternately attacking, deſtroying and expelling each other. To avoid this confuſion, I ſhall confine the name of *Turk* to thoſe of Conſtantinople, and give that of *Turkmans* to their predeceſſors.

Several hordes of Turkmans, then, having been introduced into the Arabian empire, ſoon proceeded to give law to thoſe who called them in, either as mercenaries or allies. This the Caliphs themſelves experienced in a remarkable manner. Motazam, brother and ſucceſſor of Almamoun, in 834, having taken a body of Turkmans for his guards, ſaw himſelf compelled to quit Bagdad on account of their diſorders; and

and, after him, their power and insolence increased so much, that they became the disposers of the throne and life of their Princes, and murdered three of them in less than thirty years. The Caliphs, when delivered from this first bondage, did not profit by their experience; for, about the year 935, Radi B'ellah having again resigned his authority to a Turkman, his successors were entangled in their former chains, and guarded by the Emirs-el-omara; possessed only the shadow of power. During the disorders of this anarchy, a multitude of Turkman hordes penetrated into the empire, and founded different independent states, in the Kerman, and the Korasan; at Iconium, Aleppo, Damascus, and in Egypt.

'Till this time, the present Turks distinguished by the name of *Ogouzians*, had remained to the east of the Caspian, and toward the Djihoun; but, about the beginning of the thirteenth century, Djenkiz-kan having united all the tribes of Upper Tartary against the princes of Balk and Samarcand, the Ogouzians did not wait for the Mogols, but began their march under their Chief Soliman, and, driving their herds before them, encamped (in 1214) in the Aderbejân, about fifty thousand horsemen. The Mogols following, pushed them still farther into the west, into Armenia. Soliman being drowned (in 1220), in attempting to pass the Euphrates on horseback, Ertogrul, his son succeeded, and advanced into the plains of Asia Minor, allured by the abundance of pasturage they afforded. There, the good conduct of this

chief procured him a power and reſpect which made his alliance courted by other Princes. Among theſe was the Turkman Ala-el-din, Sultan of Iconium. Ala-el-din, now old, and haraſſed by the Tartars of Djenhiz-kan, granted lands to the Turks under Ertogrul, and appointed their Chief general of all his troops. Ertogrul merited the confidence of the Sultan, and vanquiſhing the Mogols, he acquired ſtill greater power and reputation, and tranſmitted his honours to Oſman his ſon, who received from Ala-el-din, ſucceſſor of the former of that name, the Kofetan, drum, and horſe-tails, the ſymbols of command among all the Tartars. This Oſman to diſtinguiſh his followers, from the others, gave them the name of *Oſmanles*, from which we have made *Ottomans**; this new name ſoon became formidable to the Greeks of Conſtantinople, from whom Oſman conquered a ſufficient territory to erect a powerful kingdom. He ſoon gave it that title, by aſſuming, in 1300, the dignity of *Sultan*, ſignifying abſolute ſovereign.

No perſon is ignorant how his ſucceſſors, the heirs of his ambition and activity, continued to aggrandize themſelves at the expence of the Greeks; till, depriving them of whole provinces in Europe and Aſia, they at length incloſed them in the walls of Conſtantinople; and Mahomet II. ſon of Amurath, taking poſſeſſion of that city in 1453, annihilated this branch of the Roman

* This change of the *s* to the *t* ariſes from the original letter being the Engliſh *th*, which foreigners expreſs ſometimes by *t*, ſometimes by *ſ*.

Roman empire. The Turks, now disengaged from the affairs of Europe, turned their ambitious arms against the southern provinces. Bagdad, subjugated by the Tartars, had been without Caliphs from 1329, when Holagoukan, a descendant of Djenkiz, put an end to the Caliphat in the person of Mostazem; but a new power, established in Persia, had succeeded to a part of their territories; and another, formed in Egypt, so early as the tenth century, and subsisting, at that time, under the name of Mamlouks, had taken possession of Syria.

The Turks resolved to despoil these two rivals. Byazid, Mahomet's son, executed this plan in part, by taking Armenia from the Sofi of Persia, and Selim his son completed it, by vanquishing the Mamlouks. This Sultan having drawn them near to Aleppo, in 1517, under pretext of asking their assistance in the Persian war, suddenly turned his arms against them, and took from them, first Syria, and then Egypt, whither he pursued them. From that time the Turks established themselves in that country; but there are not many of them among the villages. We seldom meet with any individuals of that nation, except at Cairo; there they exercise the arts, and occupy the religious and military employments. Formerly they also were advanced to posts under government, but, during the last thirty years, a tacit revolution has taken place, which, without depriving them of the title, has stript them of all the reality of power.

This has been brought about by a fourth and last race, of which it now remains for us

to speak. Born at the foot of Mount Caucasus, they are distinguished from the other inhabitants by the flaxen colour of their hair, entirely different from that of the natives of Egypt. These were discovered there by the Crusaders in the thirteenth century, and called by them Mamelus, or, more correctly, Mamlouks. After having been almost annihilated for 230 years, by the Ottomans, they have found means to regain their consequence. The history of this class of soldiers, the events which first brought them into Egypt, the manner they have continued, and re-established themselves in that country, and their government, are political phænomena so truly singular, that they are well entitled to a few pages in giving a more particular account of them.

CHAP VII.

Abstract of the history of the Mamlouks.

THE Greeks of Constantinople, debased by an arbitrary and bigotted government, had seen, in the course of the seventh century, the finest provinces of their empire fall a prey to a new people. The Arabs, inflamed by religious fanaticism, and still more by the luxuries to which they had hitherto been strangers, conquered, within eighty years, all the north of Africa, as far as the Canaries, and the south of Asia, to the

the river Indus, and the Tartarian deſerts. But their Prophet, who preſcribed them their ablutions, faſts, and prayers, did not teach them either the ſcience of legiſlation, or thoſe principles of natural morality which are the ſolid baſis of empires and ſocieties. The Arabs underſtood how to conquer, but not to govern: wherefore, the ill conſtructed edifice of their power ſoon mouldered into ruins. The vaſt empire of the Caliphs, paſſing from deſpotiſm to anarchy, was diſmembered on every quarter; and the temporal governors, undeceived as to the ſanctity of their ſpiritual chief, every where eſtabliſhed themſelves as ſovereigns, and formed independent ſtates.

Egypt ſoon followed this example; though it was not till 969, that a regular power was erected in the perſon of princes, who, taking the name of Fatmite Caliphs, diſputed, even the title with thoſe of Bagdad. The latter, at this time, deprived of their authority, by the Turkmen ſoldiers, were incapable of oppoſing their pretenſions. Thus did the Egyptian Caliphs obtain peaceable poſſeſſion of that fertile country, of which they might have formed a powerful ſtate. But the hiſtory of the Arabs uniformly proves that this nation never underſtood the ſcience of government. The princes of Egypt, no leſs deſpotic than thoſe of Bagdad, proceeded, by ſimilar ſteps, to the ſame end. They became parties in the diſputes of religious ſects; they even erected new parties, and endeavoured to make proſelytes by perſecution. One of

them

them, named *Hakem b'amr ellah*, or *Governor by the command of God*. This man was the apoſtle of the *Druſes*. He was ſo abſurdly extravagant as to declare himſelf an incarnate God; and barbarous enough to ſet fire to Cairo, for his entertainment. Others waſted the public treaſury in a capricious luxury. The oppreſſed people held them in abhorrence; and their courtiers, emboldened by their weakneſs, were eager to ſhare the ſpoils. Thus it happened to Adhad-el-din, the laſt of that race. Having been invaded by the cruſaders, who had impoſed a tribute on him, one of his generals, who had been diſmiſſed his ſervice, threatened to deprive him of a power of which he ſhewed himſelf ſo unworthy. Knowing, that he could not reſiſt by himſelf, and unable to confide in a nation he had alienated from him, he had recourſe to foreigners. In vain did reaſon and experience dictate to him that theſe, once his defenders, would ſoon become his maſters; one falſe ſtep neceſſarily produced a ſecond. He called in that tribe of Turkmans who had enſlaved the Bagdad caliphs, and implored the aid of Nour-el-din, the ſovereign of Aleppo, who, already ravaging Egypt, haſtened to ſend an army into that country. Theſe troops effectually delivered Adhad from the tribute of the Franks, and the menaces of his general. But the Calipli ſoon found he had only changed enemies; they left him but the ſhadow of power; and Selah-el-din, who took the command of the army in 1171, ſtrangled him. Thus, the Egyptian Arabs were ſubjected to ſtrangers, whoſe

whose princes began a new dynasty in the person of Selah-el-din.

While these things were going on in Egypt, and the crusaders were, by their ill-conduct, laying the foundation of their expulsion from Syria, other revolutions were hatching in upper Asia. Djenkiz-Kan, the sole chief of almost all the Tartar hordes, only waited a favourable opportunity to invade the neighbouring states: an insult committed on some merchants, under his protection, made him resolve to turn his arms against the Sultan of Balk, and the eastern part of Persia; and these countries, about the year 1218, became the theatre of one of the most bloody devastations recorded in history. The Mogols, pillaging, burning, and murdering, without distinction, either of age or sex, reduced the whole country of Sihoun, as far as the Tigris, to a heap of ashes; and passing to the north of the Caspian sea, extended their ravages even into Russia and the Cuban. This expedition, which happened in 1220, eventually introduced the Mamlouks into Egypt. The Tartars, weary of massacre, had brought back with them a prodigious quantity of young slaves, of both sexes; their camps, and the markets of Asia, were full of them. The successors of Selah-el-din, who, as Turkmans, corresponded with the coasts of the Caspian sea, observing that they had now an opportunity of forming at a cheap rate, a body of soldiers of tried courage, and remarkable beauty; about the year 1230, one of them purchased twelve thousand of these young men, who were Tcherkasser

kaſſes, (Circaſſians), Mingrelians and Abazans. He trained them up to military exerciſes, and ſoon formed a body of the handſomeſt, and beſt ſoldiers in Aſia, though at the ſame time, the moſt mutinous, as he very ſoon experienced. This ſoldiery, like the Pretorian bands, ſoon gave laws to their maſter. They became ſtill more inſolent under his ſucceſſor, whom, in 1250, they depoſed, and, ſhortly after the diſaſter of Saint Louis, killed the laſt Turkman prince, and ſubſtituted one of their own chiefs, with the title of Sultan, retaining themſelves that of Mamlouks, which ſignifies military ſlaves; *Mamlouk* being the participle paſſive of *malak*, to poſſeſs, ſignifies one *poſſeſſed* by, or the property of, another; which gives the ſenſe of *ſlave*. But theſe are to be diſtinguiſhed from domeſtic ſlaves, or blacks, who are called *Abd*.

This is that militia of ſlaves, converted into deſpots, who, for many centuries, have given law to Egypt. From their firſt erection, the effects correſponded with the means. With no other bond of union than momentary intereſt, or public right to authority, but that of conqueſt, the Mamlouks ruled by the violence of a licentious and inſolent ſoldiery. The firſt leader whom they choſe, having found employment for their turbulent ſpirit in the conqueſt of Syria, reigned ſeventeen years; but ſince his time not one of them has governed ſo long. The ſword, bow-ſtring, or poiſon, public murder, or private aſſaſſination, have ended a ſeries of tyrants, forty-ſeven of whom are enumerated in the ſpace of two hundred and fifty-

fifty-ſeven years. At length, in 1517, Selim, Sultan of the Ottomans, having hanged Toumam Bey, their laſt chief, put a period to that dynaſty.

By the principles of Turkiſh policy, Selim ſhould have exterminated the whole body of Mamlouks; but more refined politics led him, in one inſtance, to depart from that ſanguinary cuſtom. He was ſenſible that had he eſtabliſhed a Pacha in Egypt, with equal authority as the Pachas in the other provinces, the diſtance from the capital would be a ſtrong temptation to revolt. To prevent this, he projected ſuch a form of government, that the power equally diſtributed among the different members of the ſtate, ſhould preſerve ſuch an equilibrium as to make them all dependent on himſelf. The remnant of the Mamlouks, who had eſcaped his firſt maſſacre, appeared proper for this purpoſe; and he next eſtabliſhed a Divan, or Council of Regency, conſiſting of the Pacha and the chiefs of the ſeven military corps. The office of Pacha was to notify to this council the orders of the Porte, to forward the tribute to Conſtantinople, to protect the country againſt foreign enemies, and to counteract the ambitious views of different parties; on the other hand, the Members of the Council poſſeſſed the right of rejecting the orders of the Pacha, on aſſigning their reaſons, nay, even of depoſing him; they alſo muſt ratify all civil or political ordinances. From the Mamlouks, it was agreed that the twenty-four governors, or Beys of the provinces, ſhould be choſen: to them

was

was committed the care of reſtraining the Arabs, collecting the tributes, and all the civil government of the country; but their authority was purely paſſive, and they were only the inſtruments of the determination of the council. One of them, reſiding at Cairo, was to aſſume the title of *Shaik-el-beled* *, which ſhould be rendered *Governor of the city*, in a civil ſenſe, that is to ſay, without any military power.

The Sultan alſo eſtabliſhed tributes, one deſign of which was to pay twenty thouſand infantry, and a corps of twelve thouſand cavalry, in the country; the other, to provide for Mecca and Medina, the ſupplies of corn neceſſary for them; and the third, to ſwell the Kaſna, or treaſury of Conſtantinople, and to ſupport the luxury of the ſeraglio. In other reſpects, the people, who were to provide for theſe expences, were conſidered as M. Savary very well obſerves, merely paſſive agents, and remain in ſubjection as heretofore, to all the rigours of military deſpotiſm.

This form of government fully anſwered the views of Selim, ſince it has ſubſiſted about two centuries; but within the laſt fifty years, the Porte having relaxed from its vigilance, innovations have taken place, the Mamlouks have become maſters of all the wealth and ſtrength of the country, and, in a word, gained ſuch an aſcendancy over the Turks, that the power of the latter is quite reduced. To underſtand this

* *Shaik* properly ſignifies an old man, *ſenior populi*; it has the ſame acceptation in the Eaſt as among us, and means a lord or chief.

this revolution, we muſt attend to the manner in which the Mamlouks have been continued and increaſed in Egypt.

Obſerving them to have exiſted in this country ſeveral hundred years, we ſhould be led to ſuppoſe their race is preſerved by the ordinary means; but if their firſt eſtabliſhment was ſingular, their continuation is not leſs ſo. For five hundred and fifty years in which there have been Mamlouks in Egypt, not one of them has left ſubſiſting iſſue; one family never exiſts in the ſecond generation; all their children periſh in the firſt or ſecond deſcent. The ſame thing happens with the Turks; and it is remarkable, that they can only ſecure the continuance of their families, by marrying natives, which the Mamlouks have always diſdained.

The wives of the Mamlouks, are, like the Egyptian wives, ſlaves brought from Georgia, Mingrelia, &c. Their beauty is a conſtant topic among us, and we muſt take it for granted. But an European, who has only been in Turkey, has no right to give his teſtimony on the ſubject. Theſe women are kept more inviſible there than the others, and to this no doubt their reputation for beauty is greatly owing. I had an opportunity of gathering ſome particulars concerning them from the wife of one of our merchants at Cairo, who, by dealing in the laces and ſtuffs of Lyons, had acceſs to all the Harems. This lady, who has every opportunity to form a correct judgment of them, aſſured me that, among a thouſand or twelve hundred, ſelect women ſhe had ſeen, ſhe had not

found ten real beauties. But the Turks are not difficult to pleaſe, provided a woman be fair, ſhe is handſome; if ſhe is fat, ſhe is enchanting: "her countenance is like the full moon; her "haunches are like cuſhions," ſay they, to expreſs the *ne plus ultra* of beauty. They may be ſaid to meaſure them by the quintal. They have beſides a proverb worthy the notice of naturaliſts: "Take a fair female for thy eyes, "but for pleaſure an Egyptian." Experience has proved, that the Northern women are colder than thoſe of the South, in conſtitution.

Let the naturaliſt ſay why men, well formed, and married to healthy women, cannot naturalize on the banks of the Nile, a race born at the foot of Mount Caucaſus! and let it be remembered, at the ſame time, that European plants in that country, are equally unable to coutinue their ſpecies! Some may refuſe their aſſent to this extraordinary fact, but it is not the leſs certain; nor does it appear new. The ancients made obſervations of the ſame nature: thus, when Hippocrates aſſerts, that among the Scythians and Egyptians, every individual reſembles another, though they are like no other nations; when he adds, that in the countries inhabited by theſe two races, the climate, ſeaſons, elements, and ſoil, poſſeſs an uniformity no where elſe viſible, does he not recognize that kind of excluſion of which I ſpeak? When theſe countries impreſs ſo peculiar a character on every thing native to them, is it not a reaſon why they ſhould reject whatever is foreign? It ſeems, then, that the only means of

natura-

lizing animals, and plants would be to contract an affinity with the climate, by alliance with the native ſpecies; and this, the Mamlouks have conſtantly avoided.

The means therefore by which they are continued and multiplied, are the ſame by which they were firſt eſtabliſhed; that is, at death, they are replaced by ſlaves brought from their own country. From the time of the Mogols, this trade has been continued on the borders of the Cuban and the Phaſis, in the ſame manner as in Africa, by the wars among the many tribes, and by the miſery of the inhabitants, who ſell even their own children for a livelihood.

Theſe ſlaves, both male and female, carried firſt to Conſtantinople, are afterwards diſperſed through the empire, and purchaſed by the rich. The Turks, when they over-ran Egypt, ſhould undoubtedly have prohibited this dangerous trade: their omitting this has occaſioned that reverſe of fortune which ſeems about to diſpoſſeſs them of their conqueſt, and which many political errors have been paving the way for.

For a long time the Porte had neglected the concerns of this province; and, in order to reſtrain the Pachas, had permitted the Divan to extend its power, till the chiefs of the Janiſaries and Azabs were left their own maſters. Even the ſoldiers become citizens, by the marriages they had contracted, were no longer the creatures of Conſtantinople; and a change in their diſcipline increaſed theſe diſorders.

The ſeven military corps had originally one common treaſury, and, though the ſociety was

wealthy individuals, having nothing at their own diſpoſal, could do nothing. The chiefs, finding their power circumſcribed by this regulation, had intereſt to get it aboliſhed, and obtained permiſſion to poſſeſs diſtinct property, lands, and villages. And, as theſe depended on the Mamlouk governors, it was neceſſary to conciliate them, to prevent their oppreſſions. From that time, the Beys got an aſcendancy over the ſoldiers, who, till then, had treated them with diſdain; and this could not but continually increaſe, ſince their governments procured them conſiderable riches. Theſe they uſed in creating themſelves friends and creatures. They multiplied their ſlaves, and, after emancipating them, employed all their intereſt to advance them in the army, and promote them to different employments. Theſe upſtarts, retaining for their reſpective patrons the ſubmiſſive reſpect common in the Eaſt, formed parties implicitly devoted to their will.

By theſe means, Ibrahim, one of the Kiayas, or veteran colonels of the Janiſaries, about the year 1746, made himſelf, in fact, maſter of Egypt; he had ſo multiplied and advanced his free men, that, of the twenty-four Beys, no fewer than eight belonged to his houſehold. His influence too was the more ſolid, as the Pacha always left vacancies in the number, in order to receive the emoluments. On the other hand, the preſents he beſtowed on the officers and ſoldiers of his corps, attached them to his intereſt; and Rhodoan, the moſt powerful of

the

the Azab colonels, connecting himself with him, completed his power.

As the Pacha, could not oppose this faction, he was now a mere phantom, and the orders of the Sultan gave place to those of Ibrahim. When he died, in 1757, his house, that is, his enfranchised slaves, divided among themselves, but united against all others, continued to give the law. Rodoan, who had succeeded his colleague, being expelled and slain by a party of young Beys, several chiefs followed each other in a very short time. At length, in the year 1766, Ali Bey, one of the chief actors in the troubles which attracted the attention of Europe for a number of years, gained a decided ascendency over the others; and, under the titles of Emir-Hadj, and Shaik-el-Beled, became absolute master of the country. The history of the Mamlouks being now intimately connected with his, I shall best continue the former, by giving an abstract of the latter.

CHAP. VIII.

Abstract of the History of Ali Bey.

PREFACE.

SINCE this chapter was written, M. Savary has published two additional volumes on Egypt, one of which contains the life of this fame Ali Bey. I expected to have found some particulars to

verify or correct my own; but was much aſtoniſhed to perceive, we ſcarcely agreed in one circumſtance. This was ſo much the more diſagreeable to me, as we have already differed on ſeveral other ſubjects; and it may ſeem, to many readers, as if I made it a ſtudy to contradict that traveller. But, I have no perſonal acquaintance with M. Savary, and I proteſt, that this forms no part of my character. How then happens it that, having been on the ſame ſpot, and neceſſarily drawn our materials from like ſources, our accounts ſhould be ſo different? I confeſs I am at a loſs to diſcover the reaſon: all I can ſay is, that, during the ſix months I lived at Cairo, I carefully enquired of ſuch of our merchants, as, from long reſidence, and being perſons of underſtanding, appeared to me likely to give the moſt authentic account. I found they concurred in the principal facts, and I had the advantage of hearing the accounts they gave me confirmed by a Venetian merchant (M. C. Roſetti) who was a confidential friend of Ali Bey, and the counſellor and promoter of his connections with the Ruſſians, and his ſchemes reſpecting the commerce of India. In Syria I have met with many who had been eye-witneſſes of the principal events in the hiſtory of Shaik-Daher and Ali Bey; and, from them, have been able to aſcertain the degree of credit due to the information I got in Egypt. During eight months that I reſided among the Druzes, I learnt from the Biſhop of Aleppo, formerly Biſhop of Acre, a thouſand anecdotes, the more certain, as Ibrahim Sabbar, the Miniſter

niſter of Daher, was often in his houſe. In Paleſtine I have lived with Chriſtians and Muſſulmen, who had been officers under Daher, were at the firſt ſiege of Yafa (Joppa) with Ali Bey, and defended that place in the ſecond againſt Mohammad Bey. I have been on the ſpot, and examined all the neceſſary witneſſes. I have received hiſtorical notes from the Venetian agent at Yafa, who had a conſiderable concern in all theſe troubles. Theſe are the materials from which I have compiled my narrative. I have, indeed, met with ſome circumſtances differently told; but from ſuch, what hiſtory is free? Are there not ten different accounts of the battle of Fontenoy? All we can expect is to collect what is moſt probable; for I muſt acknowledge I have been often convinced, how difficult it is to aſcertain the real truth in any hiſtorical facts.

I have formerly heard ſeveral of the ſtories related by M. Savary, who cannot be charged with having invented them himſelf, for they are taken, *verbatim*, from an Engliſh book, printed in 1783, entitled *A Hiſtory of the Revolt of Ali Bey*, though there are only forty pages appropriated to that ſubject, the remainder being common-place remarks on the manners and geography of the country. I was at Cairo when the public papers gave an account of this work; and I remember well, that when our merchants heard of Maria, wife of Ali Bey; of the Greek Daoud, his father; and finding his ſon, as Jacob found Joſeph, they were greatly amazed, and laughed heartily at the tales manufactured in Europe. It is to no purpoſe, therefore, for the Engliſh

Engliſh Factor, who was in Egypt in 1771, to appeal to the authority of the Kiaya of Ali Bey, and a number of Beys, whom he conſulted, *without underſtanding Arabic*; he can never be conſidered as well informed. I the rather ſuſpect him ſince he ſets out with an unpardonable error, in aſſerting that the country of Abaza is the ſame as that of Amaſea; for one of theſe is a country of Caucaſus, ſtretching towards the Cuban; and the other a city of ancient Cappadocia, or modern Natolia. In ſhort, we may find at Paris, *Memoirs of Ali Bey*, collected by a perſon of diſtinction, who was in Egypt, as well as M. Savary, or myſelf, and thoſe Memoirs will remove every doubt which may remain on this head.

THE birth of Ali Bey is enveloped with the ſame uncertainty as that of other Mamlouks, who, ſold by their parents, or carried off by their enemies, when very young, ſeldom recollect much about their origin or country; or if they do, conceal them. The moſt general opinion reſpecting Ali is, that he was born among the Abazans, a people living on Mount Caucaſus, and which furniſhes the moſt eſteemed ſlaves. The merchants, who carry on this trade, brought him to one of their yearly ſales, at Cairo, were he was purchaſed by the brothers Iſaac and Youſef, Jews, employed in the cuſtom-houſe, who made a preſent of him to Ibrahim Kiaya. It is ſuppoſed he would then be about twelve or fourteen years of age; but, in the Eaſt, neither Ma-

hometans

hometans nor Chriſtians keep any regiſter of births, and their age is never exactly known.

Ali did the uſual ſervices of the Mamlouks for his patron, which are much the ſame with thoſe of the pages to our Princes. He received the cuſtomary education, learning to manage a horſe well, fire the carbine and piſtol, throw the djerid, uſe the ſabre, and even a little reading and writing. In all theſe, he diſplayed an activity and ſpirit which obtained him the ſurname of *Djendali*, or madman. But ambition ſoon moderated this exceſſive warmth. When about eighteen or twenty, his patron ſuffered him to let his beard grow, that is, gave him his freedom; for among the Turks, to want muſtachios and beard, is only for ſlaves and women; and hence ariſes the unfavourable impreſſion on the firſt ſight of an European. When he had given him his liberty, Ibrahim gave him a wife and revenues, promoted him to the rank of Kachef, or Governor of a diſtrict, and, at length, cauſed him to be elected one of the four-and-twenty Beys.

Theſe promotions, and the power and wealth he acquired, awakened the ambition of Ali Bey. The death of his patron, in 1757, opened a free courſe for his ſchemes. He engaged in every intrigue for raiſing or diſplacing the chiefs, and was the principal abettor of the ruin of Rodoan Kiaya. After Rodoan, various factions alternately advanced their leaders into his place. Abd-el-Rahman occupied it in 1762, a man of little conſequence, but ſupported by ſeveral confederate houſes. Ali was at that time Shaik-el-Beled

Beled, and seized the moment when Abd-el-Rahman was heading the caravan of Mecca to get him banished; but he had himself his turn, and was exiled to Gaza. That place dependent on a Turkish Pacha, was neither so agreeable nor safe a residence as to tempt him to make it his abode; he therefore only made a pretence of taking that route, and, on the third day, turned towards the Said, where he was joined by his partizans.

He dwelt two years at Djirdja, where he digested his plans for obtaining and securing that power for which he so ardently longed. The friends his money had gained him at Cairo having at length procured his recall, in 1766, he appeared suddenly there, and in one night, slew four Beys who were inimical to him, banished other four, and became, from that time, the chief of the most numerous party. As he had now seized the whole authority, he resolved to employ it still further to promote his ambitious designs. No longer satisfied with the unimportant title of Bey, he could not submit to the authority of the Porte, and aimed at nothing less than the title of Sultan of Egypt. To this object all his measures tended; he expelled the Pacha, who had only the shadow of power; he refused the usual tribute: and, in 1768, he proceeded to coin money in his own name. After his ruin, his piasters fell 20 per cent, because it was alledged they were too much debased with alloy; but a merchant sent ten thousand of them to Marseilles, and was a considerable gainer by melting them down.

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The Porte ſaw with indignation theſe attacks on her authority; but open war alone could repel them, and circumſtances were unfavourable. Daher, eſtabliſhed in Acre, kept Syria in awe; and the Divan of Conſtantinople, occupied with the affairs of Poland, and the pretenſions of Ruſſia, bent their attention on the tranſactions in the North. The uſual plan of *capidjis* was adopted; but poiſon, or the poniard, always anticipated the bow-ſtring they bore. Ali Bey, availing himſelf of theſe circumſtances, puſhed forward his ſchemes ſucceſsfully. For ſeveral years a part of the Said had been occupied by Arab Shaiks under little ſubjection. One of them, Hammam, had formed a power capable of giving diſturbance. Ali began by delivering himſelf from this danger; and, under pretence that this Shaik concealed a treaſure entruſted to him by Ibrahim Kiaya, and that he harboured rebels, ſent a body of Mamlouks againſt him, in 1769, commanded by his favourite Mohammad Bey, who in one day put an end to both Hammam and his power.

The end of this year produced another expedition, which in its conſequences muſt have affected Europe. Ali Bey fitted out ſome veſſels at Suez, and, manning them with Mamlouks, ordered the Bey Haſſan to ſail with them to Djedda, (Gedda), the port of Mecca, which he was to ſeize, while a body of cavalry, under the command of Mohammad Bey, marched by land to take poſſeſſion of Mecca itſelf, which was given up to plunder. His ſcheme was to render Djedda the emporium of the Indian commerce;

commerce; and this plan, which was ſuggeſted by a young Venetian merchant, who poſſeſſed his confidence, was to make Europe abandon the paſſage by the Cape of Good Hope, and take the ancient route of the Mediterranean, and the Red Sea; but the event has ſhown the attempt was too haſty; and, that before gold is introduced into a country, laws ſhould be eſtabliſhed.

Ali, having vanquiſhed a petty prince of the Said, and conquered the huts of Mecca, from this time thought himſelf fitted to command the univerſe. His courtiers told him he was as powerful as the Sultan of Conſtantinople, and he believed them. Had he conſulted his reaſon, he would have perceived that Egypt, compared with the reſt of the empire, conſtituted only a very inconſiderable ſtate, and that the ſeven or eight thouſand cavalry he commanded were nothing when oppoſed to a hundred thouſand Janiſaries, whom the Sultan has at his beck: but the Mamlouks were ignorant of geography; and Ali, who viewed Egypt near, found it much larger than Turkey at a diſtance. He therefore determined to commence his conqueſts: Syria, which was in his neighbourhood, naturally preſented the firſt object, and every thing was favourable to his wiſhes. The war with Ruſſia, which broke out in 1769, occupied all the Turkiſh forces in the north. Shaik Daher, in rebellion againſt the Porte, was a powerful and faithful ally; and the extortions of the Pacha of Damaſcus, by inclining thoſe he oppreſſed to revolt, afforded the moſt favourable opportunity

opportunity of invading his government, and acquiring the title of the Deliverer of nations.

Ali saw clearly the advantage of this posture of affairs, and hastened to put his forces in motion. All his measures being taken, he detached, in 1770, under the command of five Beys, a corps of about five hundred Mamlouks, all cavalry, (for they never march on foot), and sent them to seize Gaza, in order to secure an entrance into Palestine. Osman, Pacha of Damascus, no sooner heard of this than he flew to arms. The Mamlouks, terrified at his activity and the number of his troops, held themselves in readiness to fly at the first onset, but Daher, the most indefatigable chief that Syria has known for many centuries, hastened from Acre, and extricated them from their embarrassment. Osman, who was encamped near Yafa, fled without even offering battle; and Daher, seizing Yafa, Ramla, and all Palestine, opened a road for the grand army he expected.

This army arrived about the end of February, 1771: and the gazettes of that time, stating it at sixty thousand men, led Europe to believe it was an army similar to those of Russia or Germany; but the Turks, especially those of Asia, differ still more from the Europeans in their military than their civil customs. Sixty thousand men with them are very far from being sixty thousand soldiers, as in our armies. That of which we are now speaking affords a proof of this: it might amount in fact to forty thousand men, which may be classed as follows. Five thousand Mamlouk cavalry, which was

the whole effective army; about fifteen hundred Barbary Arabs on foot, and no other infantry, for the Turks know none; with them, the cavalry is every thing. Beſides theſe, every Mamlouk having in his ſuite two footmen, armed with ſtaves, theſe would form a body of ten thouſand valets; beſides a number of ſervants and ſerradjis, or attendants on horſe back, for the Beys and Kachefs, which may be reckoned at two thouſand: all the reſt were ſutlers, and the uſual train of followers.

This was his army, as deſcribed to me in Paleſtine by thoſe who had ſeen and followed it. It was commanded by the friend of Ali, Mohammad Bey, ſurnamed *Aboudahab*, or father of gold, from the luxury of his tent and capariſons. Order and diſcipline muſt not be mentioned. The armies of the Turks and Mamlouks are only a confuſed multitude of horſemen, without uniforms, on horſes of every ſize and colour, riding without keeping their ranks, or any regular order.

This rabble proceeded to Acre, leaving, wherever they paſſed, ſufficient marks of their want of diſcipline and rapacity. At Acre, a junction was formed with the troops of Shaik Daher, conſiſting of fifteen hundred Safadians on horſeback, and commanded by his ſon Ali; twelve hundred Motualis cavalry, led by the Shaik Naſif, and about one thouſand Mograbian infantry. This junction effected, and their plan concerted, they proceeded towards Damaſcus ſome time in April. Oſman had employed this interval in preparations, and had collected an army

army equally numerous and ill-regulated. The Pachas of Said, Tripoli, and Aleppo, had joined him with their forces, and were waiting for the enemy under the walls of Damascus.

The reader must not imagine a number of complicated and artificial movements, such as those which within the last century, have reduced war with us to a science of system and calculation; the Asiatics know not even the first elements of this conduct. Their armies are mobs, their marches ravages, their campaigns mere inroads, and their battles, bloody frays; the strongest or most adventurous party goes in quest of the other, which frequently flies without offering resistance; if they stand their ground, they engage pell-mell, discharge their carbines, break their spears, and hack each other with their sabres, for they seldom have any cannon; and when they have, they are of little use. A panic often spreads without cause; one party flies, the other pursues, and shouts victory: the vanquished submit to the conqueror, and the campaign often terminates without a battle.

Such, in a great degree, were the military operations in Syria, in 1771. The combined army of Ali Bey and Daher marched to Damascus. The Pachas waited for them; they approached, and, on the 6th of June, a decisive action took place; the Mamlouks and Safadians rushed with such fury on the Turks, that, terrified at the carnage, they immediately fled, and the Pachas were not the last in endeavouring to escape. The allies became masters of the

country, and seized the city without opposition, having neither walls nor soldiers to defend it. The castle alone resisted. Its ruined fortifications had not a single cannon, much less gunners; but it was surrounded by a muddy ditch, and behind the ruins a few musqueteers were posted, and these alone were sufficient to check this army of cavalry. As the besieged, however, were already vanquished by their fears, they capitulated the third day, and the place was to be surrendered the next morning, when at day-break a most extraordinary revolution occurred.

At the very moment the signal of surrender was expected, Mohammad suddenly sounded a retreat, and all his cavalry turned towards Egypt. In vain the astonished Ali-Daher and Nasif demanded the cause of so strange a measure: the Mamlouk made no other reply to their questions, than a haughty menace; and the whole army decamped in confusion. Nor was it merely a retreat, but a positive flight; they seemed as if hotly pursued by a victorious enemy; the road from Damascus to Cairo was covered with men on foot, scattered horsemen, and stores and baggage they had abandoned. This singular occurrence was attributed, at the time, to a pretended report of the death of Ali Bey; but the real solution of the enigma was a private conference which passed at night in the tent of Mohammad Bey. Osman, finding himself too weak to oppose these combined forces, had recourse to artifice. He contrived to introduce to the Egyptian general a cunning agent, who,

who, under pretence of propoſing terms of peace, endeavoured to diſſeminate diſcord and revolt. He inſinuated to Mohammad that the part he was acting was equally unbecoming his honour, and contrary to his intereſt; that he was deceived in ſuppoſing the Sultan would leave unpuniſhed the offences of Ali Bey; that it was ſacrilege to violate ſo holy a city as Damaſcus, one of the two gates of the Caaba; that he was aſtoniſhed Mohammad ſhould prefer the favour of a ſlave of the Sultan, to that of the Sultan himſelf, and that he ſhould ſet up a ſecond maſter between him and his ſovereign; beſides, that it was evident this maſter, by daily expoſing him to new dangers, was ſacrificing him to his own perſonal ambition, and to the jealouſy of Kiaya, the Copt Rezk.

Theſe reaſons, eſpecially the two laſt, which were founded on indiſputable facts, made a ſtrong impreſſion on Mohammad and his Beys: they immediately held a council, and ſolemnly ſwore, by the ſabre and the Koran, to return inſtantly to Cairo. In conſequence of this reſolution, they decamped ſo ſuddenly, and abandoned their conqueſts with ſuch haſte, that the report of their coming preceded their arrival at Cairo only by ſix hours. Ali Bey was panic ſtruck, and wiſhed to puniſh his general on the ſpot; but Mohammad appeared ſo well ſupported, that it was impoſſible to attempt any thing againſt his perſon; it was neceſſary to diſſemble, and Ali Bey ſubmitted to this with the leſs difficulty, as he owed his fortune to his diſſimulation much more than to his bravery.

Though thus deprived, at one blow, of the fruits of ſo expenſive a war, Ali Bey did not renounce his ſchemes. He continued to ſend aſſiſtance to his ally, Daher, and prepared a ſecond army for the campaign of 1772; but fortune, weary of doing more for him than his abilities could have accompliſhed, ceaſed to favour him.

The firſt reverſe he experienced was the loſs of ſeveral cayaſſes, or boats, laden with rice, for Shaik Daher, which were taken by a Ruſſian privateer, near Damietta; but another, and ſtill more diſtreſſing accident, was the eſcape of Mohammad Bey. Ali Bey could not eaſily forget the affair of Damaſcus; yet, from the remains of that affection we retain for thoſe whom we have ſerved, he could not determine to have recourſe to violent meaſures; an expreſſion made uſe of by the Venetian merchant who enjoyed his confidence fixed his wavering reſolution; the merchant himſelf told me the anecdote.

"Have the Sultans of the Franks," ſaid Ali Bey, one day, to him, "children, as rich as "my ſon Mohammad?" "No, Seignior," anſwered the courtier, "they take care of that; "for when children become too great, they are "often in haſte to get poſſeſſion of their inheri-"tance." This went to the heart of Ali Bey. From that moment he beheld a dangerous rival in Mohammad, and determined on his ruin. To accompliſh this, with ſafety, he firſt ſent orders to all the gates of Cairo, that no Mamlouk ſhould paſs in the evening, or at night; he then ordered

ordered Mohammad into immediate baniſhment in the Said. By theſe oppoſite orders he expected to ſtop Mohammad at the gates, and that, the keepers ſeizing him, he ſhould eaſily free himſelf from his apprehenſions; but accident diſconcerted theſe vague and timid plans. Mohammad, by ſome miſtake, was ſuppoſed to be charged with private orders from Ali. He and his retinue were ſuffered to paſs, and from this moment all was loſt. Ali Bey, informed of his flight, gave orders to purſue him; but Mohammad was ſo well prepared that none durſt attack him. He retired into the Said, foaming with rage, and a deſire for vengeance. Even after his arrival there, he made another narrow eſcape. Ayoub Bey, an officer of Ali's, pretending great deteſtation of his maſter's injuſtice, received Mohammad with tranſport, and ſwore on his ſabre and the Koran, to ſhare his fortune; but, a few days after, letters were intercepted from this ſame Ayoub, to Ali, in which he promiſed without delay, the head of his enemy. Mohammad, diſcovering the plot, ſeized the traitor; and, after cutting off his hands and tongue, ſent him to Cairo to receive his patron's reward.

The Mamlouks, however, tired of the inſolence of Ali Bey, haſted in crowds to his rival; and, in about ſix weeks, Mohammad found himſelf ſufficiently ſtrong to leave the Said, and march towards Cairo. Ali Bey, ſent his troops againſt him; but many of them deſerted to the enemy: at length, in April 1772, the armies engaged in the plain of El-Maſateb, at the gates of Cairo, the iſſue of which was, that Mohammad

and

and his party entered the city, ſabre in hand. Ali Bey, having ſcarcely time to eſcape with eight hundred of his Mamlouks, repaired to Gaza, for the firſt time in his life, and attempted to get to Acre, to join his ally, Daher; but the inhabitants of Nablous and Yafa cut off his retreat; and Daher was himſelf obliged to open him a paſſage. The Arab received him with that ſimplicity and openneſs which in all ages have characterized that people, and conducted him to Acre. It was neceſſary to ſuccour Said (Sidon), which was at that time beſieged by the troops of Oſman, together with the Druzes. He accordingly marched thither, accompanied by Ali. Their united forces formed a body of about ſeven thouſand cavalry, and, at their approach, the Turks raiſed the ſiege, and retired to a place a league north of the city, on the river Aoula. There, in July 1772, the moſt important and methodical engagement of all the war took place. The Turkiſh army, three times more numerous than that of the allies, was entirely defeated. The ſeven Pachas who commanded it fled, and Said remained in the poſſeſſion of Daher, and his governor Degnizla.

Ali Bey and Daher, returning to Acre, proceeded to chaſtiſe the inhabitants of Yafa; who had revolted in order to convert to their own uſe the ammunition and clothing left there by one of Ali's fleets, before he was driven from Cairo. The city which was governed by a Shaik of Nablous, ſhut its gates, and reſolved to ſtand a ſiege. This commenced in July, and laſted eight months, though Yafa had

had no other rampart than a garden-wall, and no ditch; but in Syria and Egypt they are ſtill more ignorant of carrying on a ſiege than of engagements in the field; at length, however, Yafa capitulated in February 1773.

Ali, now diſengaged, thought of nothing but returning to Cairo. Daher offered to aſſiſt him; and the Ruſſians, with whom Ali had formed an alliance, while treating of the affair of the privateer, promiſed to ſupport him: time however was neceſſary to collect theſe ſcattered aids, and Ali became impatient. The promiſes of Rezk, his Kiaya and oracle, rendered him ſtill more anxious to be gone. This Copt conſtantly aſſuring him that the hour of his return was come; that the ſtars were moſt propitious; and that the downfal of Mohammad was now certain. Ali, who like all the Turks, firmly believed in aſtrology, and who put the greater faith in Rezk, becauſe he believed his predictions had been often verified, could no longer brook delay; and the letters he received from Cairo wound up his impatience to a height.

Early in April, he received letters from his friends, in which they informed him that the people were tired of his ungrateful ſlave, and that his preſence was only wanting to expel him. He reſolved to ſet out immediately, and, without waiting for the Ruſſians departed with his Mamlouks, and fifteen hundred Safadians, commanded by Oſman, the ſon of Daher. Little did he ſuſpect that the letters from Cairo were a ſtratagem of Mohammad's; and that this

this Bey had extorted them, in order to deceive and lead him into the ſnare he had laid for him. No ſooner had Ali advanced into the deſert which divides Gaza from Egypt, than he fell in, near Salakia, with a choſen body of a thouſand Mamlouks, who were lying in ambuſh for him. This corps was commanded by the young Bey, Mourad, who, being enamoured of the wife of Ali Bey, had obtained a promiſe of her from Mohammad, if he ſhould bring him the head of that illuſtrious unfortunate. Mourad no ſooner obſerved the duſt which announced the approach of his enemies than he ruſhed on them with his Mamlouks, and threw them into confuſion. To crown his good fortune, he encountered Ali himſelf in the crowd, attacked, and wounded him in the forehead with a ſabre, made him his priſoner, and brought him to Mohammad. The latter, who lay encamped two leagues behind, received his former maſter with all that exaggerated reſpect common among the Turks, and that ſenſibility which perfidy knows ſo well how to feign. He provided a magnificent pavilion for him, ordered him to be taken the higheſt care of, ſtiled himſelf a thouſand times, "his ſlave, who licked the very duſt of his feet;" but the third day, this parade of politeneſs ended in the death of Ali Bey, who died, as ſome ſay of his wounds; or, as others report, by poiſon: the probability of both theſe accounts is ſo equal, that it is not poſſible to decide between them.

Thus ended the enterpriſes of this famous man, who for years engaged the attention of Eu-

Europe, and led many politicians to expect a great revolution. That he was an extraordinary man, cannot be denied; but he ought not to be placed in the class of great men. The accounts given of him by creditable witnesses, prove that though he possessed the seeds of great qualities, the want of culture prevented them from coming to maturity. Without noticing his credulity in astrology, which more frequently influenced his conduct than more weighty reason; or his treacheries, perjuries, murders, even of his benefactors, such as Saleh Bey, by which he gained, or supported his power, the morality of a rude society is no doubt less rigid than that of a well-regulated state; but, judging ambitious men on their own principles, Ali Bey either very ill understood, or erroneously pursued his plan of greatness; and it was himself who paved the way for his own ruin. We are certainly warranted to charge him with three errors: First, that imprudent thirst after conquest, which fruitlessly drained his revenue, and his army, and led him to neglect the interior administration of his country. Secondly, the premature indolence to which he gave himself up, trusting every thing to his lieutenants, which lessened the respect entertained for his person by the Mamlouks, and encouraged revolt. Thirdly, the excessive riches he showered on his favourite, which procured him the influence he abused. Had Mohammad been a virtuous man, ought not Ali to have dreaded flatterers, who, in all countries, constantly attend opulence? In Ali Bey, however, one quality

lity we muſt admire, which diſtinguiſhes him from the numberleſs tyrants who have governed Egypt: if a vicious education prevented him from knowing what true glory is, it is certain, that at leaſt, he was animated with the deſire of obtaining it; and this never was the portion of vulgar minds. He only wanted the advice of thoſe who knew the true road to it; and among thoſe who are born to power, how few are there who deſerve this eulogium!

I cannot omit a few remarks on an obſervation I frequently heard made at Cairo. Thoſe of our merchants who witneſſed the reign of Ali, and his downfall, after extolling his government, juſtice, and beneficence to the Franks, never failed to expreſs their ſurpriſe at his not being regretted by the people; and took occaſion to repeat thoſe charges of inconſtancy and ingratitude with which the orientals are uſually reproached; but, on duly examining every circumſtance, this ſeems leſs extraordinary than it may at firſt appear.

In Egypt, as every where elſe, the judgment of the people is much directed by the penury or plenty in which they live; their love or hatred, cenſure or applauſe, are meaſured by the eaſe or difficulty with which they procure ſubſiſtence; nor can this be eſteemed an improper criterion. In vain may we tell them that the honour of the country, the glory of the nation, the encouragement of commerce, and the fine arts, require ſuch and ſuch meaſures; every thing muſt yield to the neceſſaries of life; and when the multitude want bread, they have at leaſt a right

to

to withhold their praiſe and admiration. Of how little conſequence was it to the people of Egypt, that Ali Bey had conquered the Said, Mecca, and Syria, if by theſe conqueſts he augmented, inſtead of relieving their burthens? The expences of theſe wars, increaſed the contributions they were obliged to raiſe. The expedition againſt Mecca alone coſt twenty-ſix millions of French livres (above one million eighty-three thouſand pounds,) and the exportation of corn for the armies, added to the monopoly which followed, cauſed a famine, which deſolated the country the whole of 1770 and 1771. When, therefore, the inhabitants of Cairo, and the peaſants were dying with hunger, are we to be ſurpriſed if they murmured againſt Ali Bey? How can we blame them for diſapproving of the commerce with India, if all its advantages were to center in a few hands? When Ali Bey expended two hundred and twenty-five thouſand livres (above nine thouſand pounds), in the uſeleſs handle of a *kandjar*, which is, a poniard carried in the belt. Though jewellers might applaud his magnificence, had not the people reaſon to deteſt his luxury? This liberality, which his courtiers termed virtue; the people, at whoſe expence it was, were juſtly entitled to ſtigmatize it as vice. Was there any merit in laviſhing what coſt him nothing? Was it juſtice to gratify his favourite at the expence of the people; or repay with their money his private obligations, as in the following inſtance:

When Ali Bey, ſet out to go into exile, for he

was baniſhed no leſs than three times, encamped near Cairo, being allowed a delay of twenty-four hours, to pay his debts: one Haſſan, a Janiſſary, to whom he owed five hundred ſequins (one hundred and fifty-ſix pounds), came to ſeek him. Ali, ſuppoſing he wanted his money, began to make excuſes. But Haſſan, producing other five hundred ſequins, ſaid to him, "You are in misfortune, take theſe alſo." Ali, aſtoniſhed at his generoſity, ſwore, by the head of the Prophet, that if he ever returned, he would confer on him unexampled wealth; accordingly, on his return, he created him Purveyor-general: and though often informed of the ſcandalous extortions of Haſſan, he never even ſo much as reprimanded him.

It muſt be owned that the conduct of Ali Bey was founded much leſs on general principles of juſtice and humanity, than gratifying his own vanity and ambition. Egypt, in his view, was his own private property, and the people a herd of worthleſs beings, of whom he might diſpoſe as he thought fit. Should we then be aſtoniſhed, if thoſe to whom he behaved like an imperious maſter have vilified his character like mercenary malecontents?

CHAP IX.

Principal occurences from the death of Ali Bey to the year 1785.

THE death of Ali Bey, did not improve the ſituation of the Egyptians; his ſucceſſors have not

not so much as imitated what was commendable in his conduct. Mohammad Bey, who succeeded, in April 1773, during his reign of two years, manifested only the ferocity of a robber, and the baseness of a traitor. As an excuse for his ingratitude to his patron, he at first pretended to be merely the defender of the Sultan's rights, and the minister of his pleasure; he therefore remitted the tribute to Constantinople which had been kept back for the last six years, and took the usual oath of obedience. He renewed his submission on the death of Ali Bey; and pretending to shew his loyalty to the Sultan, demanded permission to make war upon the Arab Daher. The Porte, who would gladly have asked this, was happy to permit it as a favour: Mohammad was invested with the title of Pacha of Cairo, and every thing was immediately prepared for this expedition. If it should be asked what could be the interest of an Egyptian Governor in destroying the Arab Daher, in rebellion in Syria? But refined policy had no more share in this than other measures. It originated altogether in private resentment. Mohammad Bey could not forgive a reproachful letter written to him by Daher, at the time of the revolution of Damascus; nor the side which the Shaik had taken against him in his quarrel with Ali Bey. To this was added the prospect of plunder. Ibrahim Sabbar, Daher's Minister, was supposed to possess prodigious riches, and the Egyptian, could he destroy Daher, hoped to gratify both his avarice and revenge.

He made no hesitation, therefore, to undertake this war, and prepared with all the activity which hatred begets. He provided himself with an extraordinary train of artillery, foreign gunners, and gave the command of them to an Englishman, one Robinson; he transported from Suez, a cannon sixteen feet long, which had lien there useless; and, at length, in February, 1776, he appeared in Palestine, with an army equal to that he had formerly commanded against Damascus. On his approach, Daher's army, which occupied Gaza, unable to defend it, retired; he took possession of it, and, immediately marched against Yafa. This town, the garrison of which, as well as the inhabitants were all inured to war, shewed more fortitude than Gaza, and determined to stand a siege. The history of the siege fully shews the ignorance of these countries in the art of war; we shall mention a few of the principal particulars.

Yafa, anciently Joppa, is situated on a part of the coast, the general level of which is very little higher than the sea. The city stands on an eminence, in the shape of a sugar loaf, about one hundred and thirty feet in perpendicular height. The houses, built on the declivity, appear rising above one another, like the steps of an amphitheatre. On the top is a small citadel, which commands the town; the bottom of the hill is surrounded by a wall without a rampart, 12 or 14 feet high, and 2 or 3 thick. By the battlements at the top it is only distinguishable from a common garden wall. This wall, with

no

no ditch, is ſurrounded by gardens, where lemons, oranges, and citrons, in this light ſoil, grow to a prodigious ſize. Such was the city Mohammad undertook to beſiege. Defended by five or ſix hundred Safadians, and as many inhabitants, who, on ſeeing the enemy, armed themſelves with their ſabres and muſkets; they had likewiſe ſome braſs cannon, twenty-four pounders, without carriages; theſe they mounted, in the beſt manner they could, on carriages prepared in a hurry; and, inſtead of experience and addreſs, inſtigated by hatred and courage, they anſwered the ſummons of the enemy by menaces and muſket-ſhot.

Mohammad, finding it neceſſary to have recourſe to force, formed his camp before the town; but was ſo ignorant of the buſineſs in which he was engaged, that he advanced within half cannon ſhot. The bullets, ſhowering on the tents, apprized him of his error; he retreated, and, by making a freſh experiment, was ſatisfied he was ſtill too near; he at length diſcovered the proper diſtance, and erected his tent, in which the moſt extravagant luxury was diſplayed. Irregularly around it, were pitched thoſe of the Mamlouks; while the Barbary Arabs erected huts with the trunks and branches of orange and lemon trees; and the followers of the army arranged themſelves in the beſt way they could: a few guards were ſcattered around, and, without one entrenchment, they ſaid they were encamped.

They were now to erect batteries; and a ſpot of riſing ground was pitched upon, to the ſouth-

east of the town, where, behind some garden-walls, eight pieces of cannon were placed, at two hundred paces from the town, and the firing began, notwithstanding the musquetry of the besieged, who, from the top of the terraces, killed several of the gunners. This will appear so strange in Europe, that the truth of it may be, perhaps, doubted; but eleven years have only since passed; I have been on the spot, have seen many eye-witnesses, and I esteem it my duty, not to alter in any degree, facts, by which the character of a nation may be so well appreciated.

A wall, only three feet thick, and no rampart, must soon have a large breach made in it; and the question was, not how to mount, but how to get through it. The Mamlouks proposed to do it on horseback; but they were made to understand that this was impossible; and they consented, for once, to march on foot. It must have been a strange sight to see them, with their huge breeches of thick Venetian cloth, their tucked-up *benishes*, their crooked sabres in hand, and pistols at their sides, advancing, and tumbling about among the ruins of the wall. They supposed they had overcome every difficulty when they had surmounted this; but the besieged, who formed a more correct judgment, waited till they got into the empty space between the city and the wall; there they poured upon them from the terraces, and windows of the houses, such a shower of bullets, that the Mamlouks never thought of setting them on fire, but retired, convinced that the breach was

utterly

utterly impracticable, since it was impossible to enter it on horseback. Morad Bey led them repeatedly back to the charge, but in vain.

Six weeks were spent in this manner, and Mohammad was distracted with rage, anxiety, and despair. The numbers of the besieged, however, were diminished by the repeated attacks; and despairing of any succours from Acre, became weary of defending alone the cause of Daher. The Mussulmen, complained, that the Christians, minded nothing but their prayers, and were more in their churches than the field of battle. Some began to treat with the enemy, and it was proposed to quit the place, on the Egyptians giving hostages. Conditions were settled, and the treaty was nearly concluded, when, from the security occasioned by that belief, some Mamlouks entered the city; numbers followed, and attempted to plunder; the inhabitants defended themselves, and the attack was renewed: all the army then rushed into the town, which suffered all the horrors of war: women and children, young and old, were cut to pieces; and Mohammad, equally mean and barbarous, erected a pyramid, formed of above 1200 heads of the unfortunate sufferers, as a monument of his victory. This happened the 19th of May, 1776, and spread terror through the country. Shaik Daher himself fled from Acre, the government of which he left to his son Ali, whose intrepidity is celebrated in Syria to this hour, but whose glory is tarnished by his frequent rebellions against his father. Ali supposed, that Mohammad would respect the treaty

he

he had made with him; but the Mamlouk, reaching the gates of Acre, declared, that the price of his friendſhip muſt be the head of Daher himſelf. Ali, thus deceived, refuſed to commit this parricide, and yielded the town to the Egyptians, who gave it up to plunder. The French merchants, with difficulty, were exempted, and were ſoon in moſt imminent danger. Mohammad, having been told that the wealth of Ibrahim, Kiaya of Daher, had been depoſited with the merchants, declared that, if it was not inſtantly delivered up, they ſhould all be put to death. The following Sunday was the day appointed for this terrible ſearch, when fortune happily delivered them and Syria from impending danger; Mohammad was ſeized with a malignant fever, and died, in two days illneſs, in the prime of his life; June 1776.

The Syrian Chriſtians are convinced his death was a puniſhment from Elias, whoſe church, on Mount Carmel, he had profaned. They even aſſert that the prophet appeared to him repeatedly in the form of an old man, and that Mohammad was afterwards conſtantly exclaiming, "Take that old man from me, who diſtreſſes "and terrifies me." But they who witneſſed the laſt moments of this General, reported at Cairo, that this was the effect of a delirium, originating from his conſcience, on account of ſome private murders: indeed, Mohammad's end may be eaſily accounted for from natural cauſes, and is to be attributed to the well known unhealthineſs of the climate, exceſſive heat, immoderate fatigue, and the anxiety occaſioned by

by the ſiege of Yafa. It may be proper here to remark, that were we to write the memoirs of modern times, in the manner of the Chriſtians of Syria and Egypt, they would no leſs abound with prodigies and apparitions, than the hiſtories of antiquity.

Mohammad's death was no ſooner known than his whole army made a haſty retreat, like that of Damaſcus, and tumultuouſly took the road to Egypt. Morad Bey, who had gained great credit by the favour of Mohammad, haſtened to regain Cairo, and to diſpute the ſovereignty with Ibrahim Bey. The latter, alſo a free-man and favourite with the deceaſed, no ſooner knew the ſtate of affairs, than he took meaſures to ſecure an authority which had been committed to him in the abſence of his patron. Every thing foreboded open war; but the two rivals, when they came to conſider the power and reſources of each other, found themſelves ſo equally matched, as to make them dread the iſſue of a combat. They therefore determined on peace, and entered into an agreement, by which the authority was to be divided, on condition that Ibrahim ſhould retain the title of Shaik-el-Beled: this arrangement their common intereſt dictated. After the death of Ali Bey, all the Beys and Cachefs, who owed their promotion to his houſe, (that is, whom he had patronized,) had repined in ſecret to ſee all the authority paſs into the hands of a new faction: the power of Mohammad, at one time their equal, had hurt their pride, and that of his ſlaves was ſtill more inſupportable: they determined, therefore

therefore, to ſhake off this yoke, and entered into intrigues and cabals, which iſſued in a union of all parties under the title of The Houſe of Ali Bey. The chiefs were, Haſſan Bey, formerly Governor of Djedda, and ſurnamed, for that reaſon, El-djed-daoui; and Iſmael, the only ſurviving Bey of thoſe created by Ibrahim Kiaya. Theſe confederates managed their plot ſo well, that Morad and Ibrahim were obliged to quit Cairo, and retire into the Said, where they were baniſhed; but, ſoon reinforced by the refugees, they returned; and vanquiſhed their enemies, who were three times their number. Iſmael and Haſſan, expelled in their turn, fled into the Said, where they ſtill continue. Morad and Ibrahim, jealous of this party, have made ſeveral unſucceſsful efforts to extinguiſh it. They at laſt granted the rebels a diſtrict above Djirdja; but the Mamlouks, who anciently long for the luxuries of Cairo, having taken ſome ſteps in 1783, Morad Bey thought it neceſſary to make another attempt to exterminate them, and I arrived at the very time when he was making his preparations. His adherents, diſperſed along the Nile, ſtopped every boat they met, and, ſtaff-in-hand, forced the wretched proprietors to follow them to Cairo. Every one fled from a ſervice which was to produce them no profit. In the city a contribution of five hundred thouſand dollars, (L. 109,375.) was impoſed upon commerce; the bakers and tradeſmen were compelled to furniſh their commodities under prime coſt, and all theſe extortions, ſo hateful in Europe,

rope, were deemed mere matters of courſe in Egypt.

Every thing being ready very early in April, Morad ſet out for the Said. Advices from Conſtantinople, and the gazettes of Europe, which re-echoed them, repreſented this expedition, as an important war, and the Morad's force as a powerful army; and it was ſo relatively to the forces he could raiſe, and the ſituation of Egypt; but it did not exceed two thouſand horſemen. To notice the conſtant falſification of news at Conſtantinople, one would imagine that the Turks there are wholly ignorant of the affairs of Egypt and Syria, or that they wiſh to miſlead the Europeans. The ſlender communication between them and theſe remote provinces of the empire renders the former ſuppoſition more likely than the latter. Again, it ſhould ſeem that our merchants, in the different factories, might procure us authentic information; but they, ſhut up in their kans, as if in priſons, give themſelves no trouble about any thing but their commerce; and content themſelves with laughing at the newſpapers of Europe. At times they have attempted to rectify errors; but their information was ſo ill-directed, that they have given up ſo troubleſome and unprofitable an attempt.

Morad, on leaving Cairo, brought his cavalry, by forced marches, along the river; his baggage and ſtores followed in boats; and the north-wind, generally prevalent, was favourable to his deſigns. The exiles, to the number of five hundred, were poſted above Djirdja.

No ſooner were they apprized of the enemy's approach then they became a prey to diſſenſion; ſome were for fighting, others adviſed to capitulate; ſeveral even adopted the latter meaſure, and ſurrendered to Morad Bey: but Haſſan and Iſmael, continuing inflexible, removed up the river towards Aſouan, followed by about two hundred and fifty horſe. Morad followed them almoſt to the Cataract, where they took ſo advantageous a ſituation, on rocky precipices, that the Mamlouks, ignorant how to conduct a war of poſts, held it impoſſible to force them. Beſides, Morad, dreading, that too long an abſence from Cairo might encourage new projects, haſtened to return; and the exiles, delivered from their dilemma, returned to their former ſituation in the Said.

In whatever ſociety the paſſions of the individuals are not directed to one general end, where every man, regarding only himſelf, conſiders the uncertainty of the next day, merely as an inducement to improve the advantage of the moment; where the chiefs, impreſſing no reſpect cannot maintain ſubordination; in ſuch a ſociety, a fixed and regular ſtate of affairs is impracticable; and the inceſſant jarring of the incoherent parts muſt give a perpetual vibration to the whole. This is conſtantly the caſe among the Mamlouks at Cairo. Scarcely had Morad returned, when a new combination of intereſts excited new diſturbances. Beſides his faction, and that of Ibrahim, and the houſe of Ali Bey, there were, at Cairo, other Beys connected with other houſes. Theſe Beys, who from

from individual weakneſs were neglected by the ruling Beys, thought proper, in July, 1783, to unite their detached forces, and form a party, which alſo claimed the ſovereign power. This league, however, was ſoon diſcovered, and five leaders, found themſelves unexpectedly exiled to the Delta. To this they feigned ſubmiſſion; but leaving the city, they took the route of the Said, the uſual and convenient aſylum of malecontents: they were in vain purſued for a day, through the deſert of the Pyramids; but they eſcaped both the Mamlouks and Arabs, and arrived ſafe at Miniah, where they took up their abode.

This village, is forty leagues above Cairo, on the banks of the Nile, which it commands, was well calculated to anſwer their deſigns. Maſters of the river, they could ſtop every thing coming from the Said; and they availed themſelves of this: the corn, annually ſent from that province, at this time, they ſeized; and Cairo, without proviſions, was in danger of a famine; while the Beys, and others whoſe lands lay in, or contiguous to the province of Fayoum, no longer received their revenues, as the exiles had laid them under contribution. To remove theſe depredations, a new expedition was neceſſary. Morad Bey, wearied of the former, refuſed to undertake a ſecond; and Ibrahim Bey took it on himſelf. In the month of Auguſt, notwithſtanding the Ramadan, the preparations were commenced; all the boats, and owners, were ſeized on, as before. Contributions were

levied, and the dealers compelled to ſupply the troops.

At length, early in October, Ibrahim ſet out with a formidable army, conſiſting of about three thouſand cavalry. It was reſolved to deſcend by the banks of the Nile, the waters not having yet left the whole country, and the ground ſtill marſhy. In a few days the armies came in ſight of each other; but Ibrahim, who had not the ſame inclination for war with Morad, did not attack the confederates; he concluded a verbal treaty, the conditions of which were the return of the Beys. Morad, ſuſpecting ſome plot againſt himſelf, was much diſſatisfied with this convention; diſtruſt took place more than ever between them; and the arrogance diſplayed by the exiles, in a general Divan, ſtill more increaſed his apprehenſions. He thought himſelf betrayed, and, to ſecure himſelf from treachery, ſet out from Cairo with his adherents, and retired into the Said. Open war was expected, but Ibrahim temporized, and, after four months, Morad advanced to Djiza, intending to decide the quarrel by battle.

Five-and-twenty days the two parties, divided by the river, continued oppoſite each other, without doing any thing. A treaty was propoſed, but Morad, diſpleaſed with the conditions, and too weak to dictate others, returned into the Said, whither he was followed by deputies, who, after four months, at length ſucceeded in bringing him again to Cairo: the conditions were, that he ſhould continue to ſhare the authority with Ibrahim, and that the five Beys ſhould be deprived

deprived of their poſſeſſions. The Beys fled, perceiving they were given up by Ibrahim; Morad purſued them, and the Arabs of the deſert having ſeized them, he brought them back to Cairo, to be under his own eye. Peace now ſeemed re-eſtabliſhed; but what had paſſed between the two chiefs had too clearly ſhewn their reſpective views to ſuffer them to continue friends; and each, ſatisfied that his rival was only watching an opportunity to get rid of him, kept conſtantly on his guard, either to avoid or attempt a ſurpriſe.

Theſe private machinations obliged Morad Bey again to leave Cairo, in 1784; but, pitching his camp cloſe by the gates, he appeared ſo determined, that Ibrahim, terrified in his turn, fled with his friends into the Said, where he continued till March 1785, when, in conſequence of a freſh treaty, he returned to Cairo, where he now participates, as formerly, in the ſupreme authority, until ſome freſh intrigue ſhall afford him an opportunity of being revenged.

This is a ſummary of the revolutions which have occurred in Egypt for ſome years paſt. I have not circumſtantially related the various events, becauſe, beſides their uncertainty, they can neither intereſt nor inform. The whole is a mixture of cabals, intrigues, treachery, and murders, which would only fatigue the reader in the repetition; it is ſufficient if he knows the leading facts; and is thus enabled to form juſt ideas of the manners and political ſituation of the country, which I ſhall now proceed to conſider more fully.

CHAP X.

Preſent Situation of Egypt.

EVER ſince the revolt of Ibrahim Kiaya, but particularly ſince that of Ali Bey, the Ottoman power has been more precarious in Egypt than any other province. The Porte ſtill retains a Pacha; but he, confined and watched in the caſtle of Cairo, is rather a priſoner of the Mamlouks, than the repreſentative of the Sultan. He is depoſed, baniſhed, or expelled at pleaſure; and, on the mere ſummons of a herald, clothed in black,* muſt deſcend † from his high ſtation. Some Pachas, choſen for that ſole purpoſe by the Porte, have attempted, by intrigues, to recover the power formerly annexed to their title; but the Beys have rendered all ſuch attempts ſo perilous, that they now tamely ſubmit to their three years captivity, and confine themſelves to the quiet enjoyment of their ſalary and emoluments.

The Beys, however, afraid of driving the Porte to ſome violent meaſure, dare not declare their independence. Every thing is tranſacted in the name of the Sultan; his orders are received, as they expreſs it, *on the hand and the eyes*; that is, with the higheſt reſpect; but this ridiculous appearance of reverence never produces obedience.

* This officer is named *Caracoulouk*.

† The formulary of depoſition conſiſts in the word *enzel*, that is, *deſcend* from the caſtle.

obedience. The tribute is often intermitted, and always greatly reduced. Various expences are charged, such as the maintenance of the canals, carriage of the rubbish of Cairo to the sea, the pay of the troops, repair of the mosques, &c. &c. which are all so many unjust and fraudulent charges. Deceit is practised as to the inundation; and nothing short of the apprehension of the Turkish Caravelles, which come annually to Damietta and Alexandria, could procure the contribution of rice and grain: even in this also means are found to lessen the effective supplies, by a collusion with those appointed to receive them. On the other hand, the Porte, adhering to her usual policy, is blind to all these abuses, well aware, that to correct them, will require expensive efforts, and possibly an open war, in which the dignity of the empire might suffer. Other, and more pressing affairs, have, also for some years, made it absolutely necessary for the Turks to collect their forces towards the North. All their attention being requisite for their immediate safety in Constantinople, they leave the restoration of their authority in the distant provinces to time, and the course of events. They are careful however, to foment divisions among the rivals, that none of them may gain an established power; and this has been found equally beneficial to the state, and advantageous to the officers, who reap large profits from the rebels, by selling their influence and protection. The present Admiral, Hasan Pacha, has frequently availed himself of this, to obtain considerable sums both from Ibrahim and Morad.

CH XI

Military Conſtitution of the Mamlouks.

THE Mamlouks, having obtained the command of Egypt, adopted meaſures which ſeem to promiſe them the poſſeſſion of the country. The moſt effectual is the precaution they have taken to degrade the corps of the Azabs and Janiſſaries: Theſe two bodies, formerly the terror of the Pacha, are now as inſignificant as himſelf. The corrupt and wretched government of the Turks has alone occaſioned this; for, before the inſurrection of Ibrahim Kiaya, the number of Turkiſh troops, which ſhould conſiſt of forty thouſand men, infantry and cavalry, had been reduced to leſs than half that number, by the extortion of the officers, who diverted the pay to their own uſe. After Ibrahim, Ali Bey completely annihilated their importance. He firſt diſplaced all the officers who offended him; left unfilled the places that became vacant; ſtripped the commanders of all influence; and ſo degraded all the Turkiſh troops, that the Janiſſaries, Azabs, and five other corps, are now only a rabble of artizans and vagabonds, who keep watch at the gates of thoſe who pay them, and tremble in the preſence of the Mamlouks, as much as the populace of Cairo. All the military force of Egypt really conſiſts in the Mamlouks. Some hundreds of them are diſperſed through

through the country, and in the villages, to support the authority of their corps, collect the tributes, and improve every opportunity of extortion; but the chief body continually remains at Cairo. From an exact computation, it appears, their number cannot exceed eight thousand five hundred men, reckoning Beys and Cachefs, common free-men, and Mamlouks who are still slaves. Among these there are a multitude of youth under twenty and twenty-two years of age.

The chief house is that of Ibrahim Bey, who has about six hundred Mamlouks. Next him is Mourad, who has not above four hundred, but who, by his audacity and prodigality, forms a counterpoise to the insatiable avarice of his rival: the other Beys, to the number of eighteen or twenty, have each from fifty to two hundred. Besides these, there is a great number of Mamlouks who may be termed *individual;* these sprung from houses which are extinct, attach themselves sometimes to one, and sometimes to another, as their interest directs; and are always ready to enter into the service of the highest bidder. We must compute also some Serradjes, a sort of domestics on horseback, who carry the orders of the Beys; but the whole does not exceed ten thousand horse. No notice is taken of infantry, which is neither known nor valued in Turkey, especially in the Asiatic provinces. The prejudices of the ancient Persians, and of the Tartars, still prevail in those countries, where war, consisting only in flight and pursuit, the horseman, best qualified for both, is reputed the only

ly ſoldier; and as, among Barbarians, the warrior is the only man of diſtinction; to walk on foot is held degrading, and is, on that account reſerved for the common people. The Mamlouks, therefore, ſuffer the inhabitants of Egypt to ride only on mules or aſſes, (and indeed the Franks of all nations are ſubjected to the ſame humiliating reſtriction; though, by proper management, and liberal preſents, this may be got over by ſtrangers of rank, who come only to viſit the country,) reſerving to themſelves the ſole privilege of riding on horſeback; and of this they make ſufficient uſe; for whether in town or the country, or if they only pay a viſit at the next door, they are never ſeen but on horſeback. Their dreſs, as well as the ſupport of their dignity, obliges them to this. This dreſs, which is the ſame with that of every other perſon in eaſy circumſtances in Turkey, deſerves to be deſcribed.

SECT. I.

Dreſs of the Mamlouks.

FIRST, they wear a wide yellow ſhirt of thin cotton, over which they throw a ſort of gown of Indian linen, or the light ſtuffs of Damaſcus and Aleppo. This robe, which they call *antari*, deſcends from the neck to the ankles, and folds over the fore-part of the body, towards the hips, where they faſten it with two ſtrings. Over this firſt covering is a ſecond, of the ſame ſhape and width, the looſe ſleeves of which deſcend to the finger ends. This they call a *coſtan*, and

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is commonly made of ſilk ſtuff, richer than the former. Both theſe are faſtened at the waiſt by a long belt, which divides the whole dreſs into two bundles. Above them is ſtill a third, which they call *djouba*; this is of cloth without lining, and is made nearly of the ſame ſhape, only the ſleeves are cut at the elbow. In winter, and even occaſionally in ſummer, this djouba is lined with fur, and converted into a peliſſe. Laſtly, above theſe three wrappers, they throw an outer garment, called the *beniſhe*. This is the cloke or robe of ceremony, and covers the whole body, even to the ends of the fingers, which it would be reckoned highly indecent to ſuffer to appear before the great. The whole habit has the appearance of a long ſack, from out of which is thruſt a bare neck, and bald head, covered with a turban. The turban of the Mamlouks, called a *Kaouk*, is cylindrical, of a yellow colour, and turned up on the outſide with a roll of muſlin artificially folded. On their feet, they wear a ſock of yellow leather, which reaches to the heels, and ſlippers without quarters, always ready to be left on the road. But the moſt ſingular part of their dreſs is a kind of pantaloon, or trowſers, ſo long as to reach to the chin, and ſo wide, that each of the legs is large enough to contain all the body, and made of that kind of Venetian cloth which the French call *faille*, which, although as pliant as the *d'Elbœuf* cloth, is thicker than the *burre* of Rouen; and to leave them at liberty to walk more at eaſe, they faſten all the looſe parts of the dreſs I have deſcribed, with a running faſh.

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Thus ſwaddled, they are not very active walkers; and thoſe who have not experienced the prejudices of different countries, will ſcarcely believe, what however is the fact, that they conſider this dreſs as exceedingly convenient. In vain we may object that it impedes their walking, and encumbers them on horſeback; or that in battle, a horſeman, if once diſmounted, is a loſt man; they anſwer, *It is our cuſtom*, and thus conſider every objection as removed.

Sect. II.

Horſe equipment of the Mamlouks.

We ſhall next enquire, whether their horſe accoutrements are more rational. Ever ſince Europeans have had ſenſe enough to examine the principles of every art, they have diſcovered that the horſe, in order to move freely beneath his rider, ſhould have as little harneſs as the ſolidity neceſſary will admit. Theſe improvements, which have taken place among us in the eighteenth century, are not adopted by the Mamlouks, who have ſcarcely attained to the knowledge of the ninth. The ſlaves of cuſtom, a horſe's ſaddle among them is a clumſy frame of wood, leather, and iron, on which a truſſequin riſes behind, eight inches above the hips of the horſeman. A pummel before projecting four or five inches, ſo as to endanger his breaſt, ſhould he ſtoop. Beneath the ſaddle, inſtead of a ſtuffed frame, they ſpread three thick woollen coverings, and the whole is faſtened by a ſurcingle, which is tied with leather thongs,

thongs, in very complicated knots, and liable to ſlip, inſtead of a buckle. They have no crupper, but a large martingale, which throws them on the ſhoulders of the horſe. The ſtirrup is a plate of copper longer and wider than the foot, with circular edges, an inch high in the center, and gradually declining toward each end; the edges are ſharp, and uſed inſtead of ſpurs, to make long inciſions, in the horſe's ſides. The common weight of a pair of ſuch ſtirrups is from nine to ten pounds, and frequently more than twelve or thirteen. The ſaddle-cloths do not weigh leſs than five-and-twenty; thus the horſe's furniture weighs above thirty-ſix pounds, which is the more ridiculous, as the Egyptian horſes are very ſmall.

The bridle is equally ill contrived; it is a kind of ſnaffle, without a joint, or curb, which being only an iron ring, binds the jaw ſo as to tear the ſkin, ſo that the bars are injured, and the horſe abſolutely has no mouth. This neceſſarily follows from the practice of the Mamlouks, who, inſtead of managing the mouth, like us, deſtroy it by violent and ſudden checks, which they uſe in a manœuvre peculiar to them. They put the horſe on a full gallop, and ſuddenly ſtop him, when at his higheſt ſpeed. Checked by the bit, the horſe bends in his hind legs, ſtiffens the fore, and ſlides along like a wooden horſe. The injury done his legs and mouth may be eaſily conceived; but the Mamlouks think it graceful, and it ſuits their mode of fighting. Notwithſtanding their ſhort ſtirrups, and the perpetual motion of their bodies, it muſt be confeſſed that they

they are firm and vigorous horſemen, and have a warlike appearance, which pleaſes even a ſtranger's eye; it muſt alſo be admitted, that their arms are more judiciouſly choſen.

SECT. III.

Arms of the Mamlouks.

THEIR chief weapon is an Engliſh carbine, thirty inches long, and of ſo wide a bore as to diſcharge at once ten or twelve balls, which, even though injudiciouſly managed, muſt do great execution. They alſo carry at their belt two large piſtols, faſtened to ſome part of their garments by a ſilk ſtring. At the bow of the ſaddle a heavy mace ſometimes hangs, to knock down their enemy; and a crooked ſabre is ſuſpended, by a ſhoulder-belt, on the left thigh, of a kind little known in Europe; the length of the blade, from the hilt to the point, is only twenty-four inches, but meaſured in the curve is at leaſt thirty. This form, which appears whimſical to us, has not been adopted without reaſon; experience teaches us, that the effect of a ſtrait blade is limited to the place and time of its fall, as it acts merely from preſſure: on the contrary, a crooked blade, preſenting its edge in retiring, ſlides by the withdrawing of the arm, and continues its action longer. The Barbarians, who generally apply themſelves chiefly to the deſtructive arts, have not ſuffered this to eſcape them; and hence the uſe of ſcymetars, ſo frequent formerly in the Eaſtern world. The Mamlouks generally procure theirs from Conſtantinople,

ſtantinople, and from Europe; but the Beys rival each other in Perſian blades, and in ſabres of the ancient ſteel of Damaſcus, (I ſay *ancient*, for ſteel is now no longer made there,) for which they frequently pay forty or fifty pounds ſterling. The qualities they value are lightneſs, the equality and ring of the temper, the waving of the iron, but chiefly, the keenneſs of the edge, which it muſt be allowed is exquiſite; but theſe blades are defective, being as brittle as glaſs.

SECT. IV.

Education and Exerciſes of the Mamlouks.

THE right uſe of theſe arms forms the education of the Mamlouks, and all the occupation of their lives. Every day, early in the morning, moſt of them reſort to a plain, near Cairo, and there, at full gallop, exerciſe themſelves in drawing out their carbine expeditiouſly from the bandaleer, diſcharging it with a good aim, and then throwing it below their thigh, ſeize a piſtol, which they fire and throw over their ſhoulder; immediately firing a ſecond, and throwing it in like manner, truſting to the ſtring by which they are faſtened, without loſing time in returning them to their place. The Beys who may be preſent, encourage them; and whoever breaks in pieces the earthen veſſel which anſwers by way of butt, receives great rewards in commendations and money. They alſo practiſe the management of the ſabre, and eſpecially the *coup de revers* which cuts upwards, and is the moſt difficult to parry. Their blades are ſo

ſharp, and they handle them ſo well, that many of them can cut a clew of wet cotton like a piece of butter. They ſhoot alſo with bows and arrows, though they no longer uſe them in battle. But their favourite exerciſe is throwing the *djerid:* this word, which properly ſignifies a reed, generally means any ſtaff thrown by the hand, after the manner of the Roman pilum. For a ſtaff, the Mamlouks uſe branches of the palm-tree, freſh ſtripped. Theſe branches, ſhaped like the ſtalk of an artichoke, are four feet long, and weigh five or ſix pounds. Thus armed, the Cavaliers enter the liſts, and, at full ſpeed, throw them at one another from a conſiderable diſtance. The aſſailant, whenever he has thrown, turns his horſe, and his antagoniſt purſues, and throws his in his turn. The horſes, uſed to this exerciſe, ſecond their maſters ſo well, that they ſeem to ſhare in the pleaſure. But this is attended with danger; for ſome can dart this weapon ſo forcibly, as often to wound, and ſometimes mortally. Unfortunate was he who could not eſcape the djerid of Ali Bey! Theſe ſports which to us appear barbarous, are intimately connected with the political ſtate of nations. It is not yet three centuries ſince they exiſted among ourſelves, and their being laid aſide is leſs owing to the accident of Henry the Second, or a ſpirit of philoſophy, than to the ſtate of internal peace which has made them uſeleſs. Among the Mamlouks and Turks, on the contrary, they are retained, becauſe the anarchy in which they live renders whatever relates to the art of war abſolutely neceſſary. We

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ſhall next enquire whether their progreſs in this art bears pace with their practice.

Sect. V.

The Military Skill of the Mamlouks.

In Europe when we hear of troops, and war, we inſtantly conceive a number of men divided into companies, battalions, and ſquadrons; their uniforms well fitted, and of various colours, ranks and lines formed, combinations of particular manœuvres, or general evolutions; and, in one word, a complete ſyſtem of operations founded on eſtabliſhed principles. Theſe ideas are correct as to ourſelves, but, when applied to the countries of which we ſpeak, are erroneous indeed. The Mamlouks know nothing of our military manœuvres; they have neither uniforms, order, diſcipline, nor even ſubordination. Their troops are a mob, their march confuſion, their battles duels, and their war robbery and plunder, which commonly commences in the very city of Cairo; and, when there is the leaſt cauſe to expect it. A cabal gathers, the Beys mount their horſes, the alarm ſpreads, and their adverſaries appear: they charge in the ſtreet, ſabre in hand: a few murthers decide the conteſt, and the weakeſt or moſt timid is exiled. The people are perfect cyphers in theſe encounters. It is of no conſequence to them that their tyrants cut one anothers throats. But it muſt not be underſtood that they ſtand beſide indifferent ſpectators, that would be too dangerous among bullets and ſcymetars; every one

trigues, which conſtantly agitate the whole nation. No ſooner is a ſlave made free than he aſpires to the principal employments; and, who can oppoſe his pretenſions? In thoſe who command, he ſees no ſuperiority of talents which can impreſs with reſpect; in them he ſees only ſoldiers like himſelf, arrived at power by *the decrees of fate;* and if fate favour him, he will attain it alſo, nor will he be leſs capable to govern, which is merely taking money, and giving blows with the ſabre.

This ſyſtem has alſo produced an unbridled luxury, which, indulging the gratification of every ſuppoſed want, has opened an unlimited field to rapacity among the great. This luxury is ſo unbounded, that there is not a Mamlouk, whoſe ſupport coſts leſs than a hundred and four pounds annually, and many of them double that ſum. At every return of the Ramadan, they muſt have a new ſuit of dreſſes, French and Venetian cloths, and Damaſcus and India ſtuffs. They muſt often likewiſe have new horſes and harneſs; piſtols and ſabres from Damaſcus, gilt ſtirrups, and ſadles and plated bridles. The chiefs, are diſtinguiſhed from the vulgar, by trinkets, precious ſtones, Arabian horſes of two or three hundred pounds value, ſhawls of Caſhmire worth from five-and-twenty to fifty pounds each, and a variety of peliſſes, none of them under twenty pounds, ſo that the European merchants, who have adopted this luxury, do not think they have a decent wardrobe, unleſs its value exceeds five or ſix hundred pounds. The women have laid aſide the ancient

ancient cuſtom of wearing ſequins on the head and breaſt, as not ſufficiently coſtly, and in their ſtead have ſubſtituted diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and the fineſt pearls; and to their attachment to ſhawls and furs, have added a paſſion for Lyons ſtuffs and laces. When ſuch luxuries are become neceſſaries to thoſe whoſe power is uncontrouled, and who neither reſpect property, nor the life of their inferiors, it is eaſy to imagine what the condition of their ſubjects muſt be, who muſt furniſh them with every thing their caprice teaches them to wiſh for.

SECT. VII.

Manners of the Mamlouks.

THEIR manners are ſuch, that with the ſtricteſt adherence to truth, I fear I ſhall be ſuſpected of prejudice and exaggeration. Educated in general in the rites of the Greek church, and circumciſed whenever they are bought, they are conſidered by the Turks as Renegadoes, void of faith and religion. Strangers to one another, they are not cemented by thoſe natural ties which unite mankind in general. Without parents, or children, the paſt has done nothing for them, and they do nothing for the future. Educated in ignorance and ſuperſtition, they become ferocious from habitual murder, perfidious from cabals, ſeditious from riot, baſe, deceitful, and corrupted by every ſpecies of debauchery. Above all, they are addicted to that abominable vice which at all times the

the Greeks and the Tartars have been addicted to, and is the firſt leſſon of their maſters. It is not eaſy to account for this, when it is conſidered that they all have women, unleſs we ſuppoſe they ſeek in the one ſex, that poignancy of refuſal, which they do not allow in the other. Certain it is, that there is not a Mamlouk unpolluted by this depravity; and the infection has ſpread among the inhabitants, and even the Chriſtians of Syria who reſide in Cairo.

CHAP. XII.

Government of the Mamlouks.

SUCH is the claſs of men who now govern and decide the fate of Egypt: indebted to a few lucky ſtrokes of the ſabre, a greater degree of cunning or audacity, for this pre-eminence; but it is not to be ſuppoſed, that in changing fortune theſe upſtarts change character; they have all the meanneſs of ſlaves, though ranked with monarchs. To rule with them, is not the difficult art of directing the various paſſions of a numerous ſociety to one common object, but merely the means of poſſeſſing more women, toys, horſes, and ſlaves, and ſatisfying all their caprices. The whole ſyſtem of adminiſtration, internal and external, is conducted on this principle. It conſiſts in intriguing againſt the court of Conſtantinople, ſo as to evade the tribute, or the threatnings of the Sultan; and in purchaſing

ing a number of slaves, increasing partisans, countermining plots, and destroying their secret enemies by the dagger or poison. Constantly tortured by suspicion, the chiefs live like tyrants of Syracuse. Morad and Ibrahim always sleep amidst carbines and sabres, nor have they any conception of police or a well regulated government. The following incident will elucidate this:

When at Cairo, some Mamlouks carried off the wife of a Jew who was crossing the Nile with her husband. The Jew complaining to Morad, that Bey replied in his rough tone of voice: *Well, let the young folks amuse themselves!* In the evening, the Mamlouks acquainted the Jew that they would restore him his wife if he would pay them one hundred piasters *for their trouble;* and to this he was obliged to submit. This instance is the more in point, since in this country women are held more sacred than life itself.

Their only business is to procure money; and the most simple method is to seize it by violence wherever it can be found, and to impose arbitrary contributions on the villages, and on the custom house, which, in its turn, levies them anew upon trade.

SECT. I.

Situation of the people in Egypt.

We may easily conceive that in such a country, every thing is correspondent with its wretched government. Wherever the labourer is denied

nied the enjoyment of the fruit of his labour: he works by conſtraint, and induſtry languiſhes: When there is no ſecurity in property, there can be no induſtry to procure it, and the arts muſt remain in their infancy. Where knowledge has no object, it is not worth acquiring, and the mind will continue in a ſtate of barbariſm. Such is the ſtate of Egypt. The greater part of the lands are in the poſſeſſion of the Beys, the Mamlouks and the lawyers; the number of the other proprietors is very ſmall, and their property liable to many impoſitions. Every inſtant ſome contribution is to be paid, or ſome damage repaired: there is no right of ſucceſſion, or inheritance for real property; every thing returns to government, from which every thing muſt be re-purchaſed. The peaſants are hired labourers, who only get what is barely ſufficient to ſuſtain life. The rice and corn is carried to the table of their maſters, and nothing for them but dourra or Indian millet, of which they make an unleavened bread which is taſteleſs when cold. This bread, baked by a fire made with the dried dung of buffaloes and cows, is, with water and raw onions, their only food through the year; and they reckon themſelves happy if they can procure a little honey, cheeſe, ſour milk, and dates. Fleſh meat, and fat, which they are exceſſively fond of, are only ſeen on the great feſtivals, and among thoſe who are in the higher line of life.

All their clothing conſiſts in a coarſe blue linen ſhirt, and in a clumſy black cloak. Their head-dreſs is a kind of cloth-bonnet, over which they

they roll a red woollen long handkerchief. Their arms, legs, and breasts are naked, and most of them have not even drawers. Their habitations are mud-walled huts, where they are suffocated with heat and smoke, and often attacked by distempers arising from uncleanness, dampness, and unwholesome food; and, to fill up the measure of their misery, to these physical evils are added continual alarms, the dread of the robberies of the Arabs, and the extortions of the Mamlouks, family quarrels, and all the miseries of constant civil wars.

This is a faithful picture of all the villages, and no less so of the towns. Even At Cairo, the stranger, on his arrival, is struck with the appearance of universal wretchedness and misery. The crowds thronging the streets, present nothing but filthy rags, and disgusting nudities to view. No doubt he often sees horsemen richly clad; but this ostentation of luxury only renders the contrast of indigence the more shocking. Every thing he sees or hears, reminds him he is in the abode of slavery and tyranny. Nothing is spoken of but intestine broils, public misery, pecuniary extortions, bastinadoes and murders. There is no protection for life or property. Human blood is shed like that of the vilest animals. Justice herself condemns to death without form. The officer in his nightly rounds, and the officer of the day in his circuit, judge, condemn, and execute in the twinkling of an eye, without appeal. Executioners attend them, and on the first signal,

nal, the head of the unfortunate victim falls into the leathern bag, in which it is received to prevent ſoiling the place. Were the appearance of criminality neceſſary to puniſhment, this would be more tolerable; but, often, without any other cauſe than the avarice of a powerful chieftain, or a malicious information, a man is ſummoned before ſome Bey, ſuſpected of having money. A ſum is demanded, and if he denies that he poſſeſſes it, he is thrown on his back, and receives two or three hundred blows on the ſoles of his feet, nay, ſometimes is put to death. Unfortunate is the man who is ſuſpected to be in eaſy circumſtances! A hundred ſpies are on the watch ready to accuſe him; and it can only be by aſſuming the appearance of poverty, that he can expect to eſcape the rapaciouſneſs of power.

SECT. II.

The late Miſery and Famine of Egypt.

THESE laſt three years, Cairo and all the country, has exhibited a ſpectacle of the moſt lamentable miſery. To the inceſſant evils of uncontrouled tyranny, and the effects of the troubles of the preceding years, were added natural calamities ſtill more deſtructive. The plague, imported from Conſtantinople in November, 1783, made its accuſtomed ravages during all the winter. Above fifteen hundred dead bodies were eſtimated to be carried out of the gates

gates of Cairo in one day.* The ſummer, as uſual, mitigated its fury; but to this ſcourge, another, no leſs terrible, ſoon ſucceeded. The inundation of 1783 was ſcanty, great part of the lands could not therefore be ſown, and another part was not plowed for want of ſeed. In 1784, the Nile again was unfavourable, and the dearth immediately became exceſſive. Soon after November, the famine carried off at Cairo, nearly as many as the plague; on the ſtreets, formerly full of beggars, not a ſingle one to be ſeen: all had periſhed, or deſerted the city. Nor were its ravages leſs terrible in the villages; a vaſt number of wretches, who attempted to avoid death, were ſpread over the adjacent countries. I ſaw Syria filled with them. In January 1785, the ſtreets of Saide and Acre, and every town in Paleſtine, were crowded with Egyptians, eaſily known by their tawny ſkin; and ſome of them had wandered as far as Aleppo and the Diarbekar. The depopulation of theſe two years cannot be exactly eſtimated, as the Turks keep no regiſters of births, deaths, or the number of the people; from their ſuperſtitious principles, but it was the general opinion, that the country had loſt a full ſixth part of its inhabitants.

Thus ſituated, all thoſe dreadful ſcenes were renewed, at the bare mention of which, human nature ſhudders, and the ſight of which impreſ-

* In Turkey, the tombs, according to the cuſtom of the ancients, are always without the towns; and as each tomb has uſually a large ſtone, and ſome maſonry, they conſtitute what may almoſt be called a ſecond town, which may be named, as formerly at Alexandria, *Necropolis*, or the city of the dead.

ſes a melancholy horror which cannot be effaced. For, as during the famine, ſome years ſince in Bengal, the ſtreets and public places ſwarmed with meagre dying ſkeletons; whoſe quivering voices implored, in vain, the pity of paſſengers, the common danger having hardened every heart. Theſe wretches died before the very doors of the Beys, who had large quantities of rice and corn hoarded up; and often the Mamlouks, teazed with their cries, chaſed them away with blows. Every diſtreſſing mean of aſſwaging the rage of hunger was tried, every thing the moſt filthy devoured; nor, ſhall I ever forget, that, when returning from Syria to France, in March 1785, I ſaw, beneath the walls of ancient Alexandria, two wretches ſat on the dead body of a camel, and diſputing its putrid fragments with the dogs.

There are among us, hearts of noble and exalted ſentiments, who, though feeling compaſſion for ſuch diſmal calamities, find their indignation awakened, and conſider it as a crime to the men who will ſubmit to ſuffer them. They conſider thoſe well deſerving death, who have not the boldneſs to defend themſelves from it, or at leaſt, to ſeek the conſolation of exemplary vengeance. They even go ſo far as to adduce theſe facts in proof of a moral paradox, perhaps raſhly advanced, and endeavour to demonſtrate from them the pretended axiom—"that the inhabitants of hot countries, debaſed by climate and temperament, are deſtined, by nature, to be the ſlaves of deſpotiſm."

But

But have they thoroughly informed themselves whether the same abject submission is not to be found in climates they are pleased to honour with exclusive liberty? Have they carefully considered whether the general facts on which they build be not accompanied with circumstances and accessaries which make an essential difference in the consequences? In politics, as in medicine, detached phænomena continually lead us into error respecting the real causes of the malady. Men are too anxious to erect particular cases into general rules; and yet those universal principles, which are so flattering to the mind, have almost invariably the defect of being vague. So rarely are the facts on which we reason exact, and so liable to mistake is the most careful observer, that unless we are extremely cautious, we shall be continually building hypotheses on ideal bases.

In the present instance, if we attentively examine the causes of the debasement of the Egyptians, we shall find that this people, depressed by cruel circumstances, are more deserving of pity than contempt, for the political situation of this country is very unlike that of Europe. Among us, the traces of ancient revolutions are becoming fainter every day; the foreign conquerors have assimilated with the conquered natives; and from this mixture has been formed one national body, all the members of which have the same interest. In Egypt, on the contrary, and throughout almost all Asia, the original inhabitants, enslaved by revolutions, the effects of which are still apparent, are become a

prey to foreign conquerors, who, mixing with the natives, have formed distinct parties, whose interests are directly opposite. The state is properly divided into two factions; one, that of the conquering nation, who are in possession of all the civil and military employments; and the other, that of the vanquished, who constitute the subaltern classes of society. The ruling party assuming, by right of conquest, an exclusive title to all property, treat the governed faction as merely the passive instrument of their pleasures, while the latter, in their turn, destitute of all personal interest, contribute as little as possible to the service of the other. They are in the situation of slaves whose master's opulence is a burthen to them, and who would willingly free themselves from his servitude, if they could.

Such emasculation is another of the characteristics which distinguish the constitution of these nations from those of Europe. In the European states, the governments, deriving from each respective nation the means of governing it, find it neither an easy matter, nor their interest to abuse their power. And even supposing they formed distinct interests, they would still be unable to obtain unlimited powers. The reason is, that besides the multitude called *people*, which, though powerful from its number, is always feeble from its disunion, there exists a middle order, which, partaking of the qualities of the governors and the governed, maintains, in some measure, an equilibrium between the one and the other. This is the class

of

of the opulent and independent citizens, who, diſperſed through the different occupations of ſociety, have a common intereſt in ſeeing thoſe rights of property and ſecurity which they enjoy reſpected. In Egypt, on the contrary, there is no middle ſtate; none of our numerous claſſes of nobility; no clergy, merchants, or landholders, which, in ſome degree, conſtitute an intermediate body between the common people and the government. There, every man is a ſoldier, or profeſſor of the law, that is to ſay, a creature of the government; or he is a labourer, an artizan, or ſhopkeeper, that is to ſay, one of the people; and the people above all are deficient in the firſt requiſite to combat oppreſſion, the art of combining and directing their force. To deſtroy or to reform the Mamlouks, a general league of the peaſantry is neceſſary; and this it is impoſſible to form. The ſyſtem of oppreſſion is methodical. One would imagine theſe tyrants were every where endued with an intuitive knowledge of its principles. Each province, each diſtrict, has its governor, and each village its lieutenant, (*câimacân* in Arabic, from *kaiem mâkam*, which ſignifies literally *locum tenens*,) who watches the motions of the multitude. Single againſt ſuch numbers, he may appear feeble; but the power he repreſents renders him formidable. Beſides, experience proves that wherever a man has the courage to make himſelf maſter he finds enough whoſe meanneſs will ſecond his pretenſions. This lieutenant transfers a portion of his authority to ſome individuals of the ſociety he oppreſſes,

and theſe become his ſupporters: with mutual jealouſy endeavour to ſupplant each other in his favour, and he makes them the inſtruments of their mutual deſtruction.

The villages are alſo torn with the ſame jealouſies and inveterate hatreds. But even ſuppoſing an union which is ſo difficult to take place, what could a crowd of bare-footed and almoſt naked peaſants, with only ſticks, or even with muſkets, effect againſt a body of diſciplined and well-armed cavalry? I am, above all, led to believe Egypt can never ſhake off this yoke, when I conſider the nature of the country, which is but too advantageous for cavalry. If the beſt regulated infantry among us dread to encounter the horſe in a plain, how formidable muſt they be to a people who are wholly ignorant of the very firſt elements of tactics, and who can never poſſibly acquire a knowledge which can only be the reſult of an experience their ſituation denies them. Mountainous countries, alone, afford to liberty its great reſources. It is there that ſkill and addreſs, favoured by ſituation, ſupply the deficiency of numbers. The revolters, unanimous, becauſe they are at firſt not numerous, acquire every day new ſtrength, from the habit of exerciſing it, while the oppreſſor, leſs active, becauſe he is already powerful, delays his attack, till at length theſe bands of peaſants, or plunderers, whom he deſpiſed, become ſoldiers inured to war, and diſpute with him, even in the plains, the ſuperiority in military ſkill, and the palm of victory. In flat countries, on the contrary, the firſt tumult is

ſup-

ſuppreſſed, and the ignorant peaſant, who does not even know how to throw up an entrenchment, has no other reſource but in the clemency of his maſter, and a quiet ſubmiſſion to his ſlavery. We find therefore, that no general principle is more indiſputable than the following: *That indolence and ſlavery inhabit the plains, but the ſtandards of energy and of freedom wave on the mountains.*

Certain it is, that moſt of the ancient and modern nations, who have diſplayed the greateſt activity, were mountaineers. The Aſſyrians, who extended their conqueſts from Indus to the Mediterranean, came from the mountains of Atouria. The Chaldeans were originally from the ſame countries; the Perſians who conquered under Cyrus, deſcended from the mountains of the Elymais, and the Macedonians from Mount Rhodope. In modern times, the Swiſs, the Scots, the Savoyards, the Miquelets, the Aſturians, the inhabitants of the Cevennes, always free, or difficult to ſubject, would ſeem to prove this a general rule, did not the exception of the Arabs and the Tartars indicate ſome other moral cauſe, common to the plains as well as to the mountains.

Such is the ſituation of Egypt at preſent, that although its inhabitants may not diſplay much courage, yet it does not follow that the ſeeds of it are wanting in them, or that it is denied them by the climate. For that continued effort of the mind, called courage, is a quality more nearly allied to our moral, than our phyſical conſtitution. It is not the greater or leſs

degree

degree of heat in the climate, but rather the ardour of the paſſions, and the confidence we have in our own powers, which enables us to brave danger. Where theſe two requiſites do not exiſt, courage may remain inert; though circumſtances alone are wanting to call into action. Beſides, if any men are capable of this ardour, it ſhould be thoſe whoſe minds and bodies, inured to ſuffering by habit, have acquired a hardineſs which blunts the edge of pain, and ſuch are the Egyptians. We deceive ourſelves when we repreſent them as enervated by heat, or effeminate from debauchery. The inhabitants of the cities, and men of opulence, may indeed be a prey to that effeminacy which is common to them in every climate; but the poor deſpiſed peaſants, denominated *fellahs*, ſupport aſtoniſhing fatigues. I have ſeen them paſs whole days in drawing water from the Nile, expoſed naked to a ſun which would kill us. Thoſe who are valets to the Mamlouks, continually follow their maſters. In town, or in the country, and amid all the dangers of war, they accompany them every where, and always on foot; they will run with their horſes for days together, and when tired out, tie themſelves to their tails rather than be left behind.

Their mental character correſponds in every particular with the hardineſs of their bodies. The implacability diſplayed by theſe peaſants in their hatreds, and their revenges*; their obſtinacy

* In a caſe of murder, the relations of the deceaſed demand a retaliation from the family of the aſſaſſin, and this vengeance is purſued from generation to generation, without ever being forgotten.

ſtinacy in the battles which frequently happen between different villages; their ſenſe of honour in ſuffering the baſtinado, without diſcovering a ſecret*, and even the barbarity with which they puniſh the ſlighteſt deviation from chaſtity in their wives and daughters†, all prove that their minds, when ſwayed by certain prejudices, are capable of great energy, and that that energy only wants a proper direction, to become a formidable courage. The cruelties and ſeditions which have ſometimes been the conſequence of their exhauſted patience, eſpecially in the province of Sharkia, betrays the latent fire, which waits only the proper ſtimuli to make it blaze forth in a wonderful and unexpected manner.

SECT. III.

State of the Arts.

ONE grand obſtacle to every fortunate revolution in Egypt, is the profound ignorance of the nation, which equally prevents them from diſcovering the cauſes of their evils, or uſing the neceſſary remedies.

As I ſhall diſcuſs this ſubject, which, like ſeveral of the preceding ones, is common to all the

* If an Egyptian has undergone the torture, without diſcovering his wealth, he is ſaid to be *a man*, and this eulogium indemnifies him for his ſuffering.

† They are frequently put to death on mere ſuſpicion; and this is equally true in Syria. When I was at Ramla, a peaſant came into the market for ſeveral days, with his cloak ſtained with the blood of his daughter, whom he had thus killed; the action indeed was generally approved. Such matters come not within the cognizance of Turkiſh juſtice.

the Turkiſh empire, more fully in another place, I ſhall not at preſent dwell on particulars. It will be ſufficient to obſerve, that this ignorance, diffuſed through every claſs, extends its effect to every ſpecies of moral and phyſical knowledge, to the ſciences, and the fine arts, and even to the mechanical profeſſions. The moſt ſimple of theſe are ſtill in a ſtate of infancy. The work of their cabinet-makers, lockſmiths, and gunſmiths, is extremely clumſy. Their mercery, their hardware, their gun and piſtol barrels, are all imported from foreign countries. With difficulty can you find one watchmaker at Cairo who knows how to repair a watch, and he too is an European. Jewellers are more common there than at Smyrna and Aleppo; but they know not how to mount properly the ſimpleſt roſe. Gunpowder is made there, but it is coarſe. Sugar is refined there, but it is full of molaſſes, and the white is exceſſively dear. The only manufacture in any degree of perfection is their ſilk ſtuffs; which are much inferior workmanſhip, yet bear far greater prices than thoſe of Europe.

CHAP. XIII.

State of Commerce.

AT Cairo, where barbariſm ſo univerſally prevails, it cannot but appear aſtoniſhing that commerce

merce ſhould ſtill continue to flouriſh as it does; but an attentive enquiry into the ſources from whence it is derived will explain the reaſon.

This city is indebted to two powerful cauſes for its extenſive commerce; the firſt of which is, that all the commodities conſumed in Egypt are collected within the walls of that city; and all the perſons of property, that is, the Mamlouks and lawyers are aſſembled there, and draw thither their whole revenues, without making any return to the country whence they come.

The other is the ſituation, which makes this a centre of circulation, while by the Red Sea, it correſponds with Arabia and India; by the Nile, with Abyſſinia and the interior parts of Africa; and by the Mediterranean, with Europe and the empire of Turkey. Every year a caravan from Abyſſinia arrives at Cairo, and brings from a thouſand to twelve hundred black ſlaves, as alſo elephants teeth, gold duſt, oſtrich-feathers, gums, parrots, and monkeys*, while another, deſtined for Mecca, leaves the extremities of Morocco, and receiving pilgrims even from the river of Senegal†, coaſts along the Mediterranean, collecting thoſe of Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis, and arrives by the deſert at

* The route of this caravan is along the banks of the Nile; it was with that Mr *Bruce* returned in 1772, from Abyſſinia, after having performed the moſt adventurous journey attempted in the preſent age. In traverſing the deſert, the proviſions of the caravan fell ſhort, and the travellers lived ſeveral days on *gum* alone.

† I ſaw ſeveral negroes who came by this caravan, from the country of the *Foulis*, to the north of Senegal, and who ſaid they had ſeen Europeans in their country.

at Alexandria, conſiſting of not leſs than three or four thouſand camels. From thence it proceeds to Cairo, where it joins the caravan of Egypt. They then jointly ſet out for Mecca, whence they return one hundred days after. But the pilgrims of Morocco, who have ſix hundred leagues more to travel, do not reach home till after an abſence of more than a year. Theſe caravans are laded with India ſtuffs, ſhawls, gums, pearls, perfumes, and chiefly with the coffee of Yemen.

The ſame commodities are brought by another route to Suez, to which port the ſoutherly winds bring, in May, ſix or eight ſail of veſſels from Djedda. Cairo does not retain the whole quantity of this merchandize; but, beſides what is there conſumed, conſiderable profits ariſe from the duties, and the ſums expended by the pilgrims. On the other hand, ſmall caravans arrive from time to time from Damaſcus with ſilk and cotton ſtuffs, oils, and dried fruits. During the favourable ſeaſon, there are always ſome veſſels in the road of Damietta, unloading hogſheads of tobacco from Latakia, the conſumption of which in Egypt is enormous. Theſe veſſels take rice in exchange, whilſt others arrive ſucceſſively at Alexandria, bringing clothing, arms, furs, paſſengers, and wrought ſilk, from Conſtantinople. Veſſels come likewiſe from Marſeilles, Leghorn, and Venice, with cloths, cochineal, Lyons ſtuffs, and laces, grocery, paper, iron, lead, Venetian ſequins, and Ceron dollars. All theſe articles convey-

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ed by sea to Rosetta in barks called *djerm**, are first landed there, then reimbarked on the Nile, and sent to Cairo. From this account, it is not surprizing that commerce should continue so flourishing in that capital, and we need not hesitate to admit the report of the commissioner general of the customs, who asserted, that in 1783, Cairo had traded to the amount of near a hundred and fifty millions of livres, (six million two hundred and fifty thousand pounds.) But if we examine the channels into which this wealth is poured, if we consider that a great part of the merchandize and coffee of India passes into foreign countries, the value of which is paid in goods from Europe and Turkey; that the consumption of the country almost entirely consists of articles of luxury completely finished, and that the produce given in return is principally in raw materials, we shall find that this great trade is carried on without contributing much to the general wealth of Egypt, or the comfort of the inhabitants.

CHAP XIV.

Of the Isthmus of Suez, and the Practicability of opening a Canal between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

I HAVE already taken notice of the trade of Cairo, with Arabia and India, by the way of

 Suez;

* A kind of boat rigged with an extremely large lateen sail, striped blue and brown, like ticking.

Suez; and this subject naturally leads to a question frequently agitated in Europe; which is, whether it would be practicable to cut through the Isthmus which separates the Red Sea from the Mediterranean, that vessels might arrive at India by a shorter route than by the Cape of Good Hope. The narrowness of the Isthmus induces us to believe it might easily be effected; but, in a journey I made to Suez, the following reasons induced me to alter my opinion.

First, It is certainly true, that the space which separates the two seas is not more than eighteen or nineteen ordinary leagues; it is true, also, that this interval is not intersected by mountains, and that, from the tops of the terraces at Suez, we cannot discover, with any telescopes, a single obstacle on the naked and barren plain to the north-west: it is not therefore the difference of levels which prevents the junction;* but, the great difficulty arises from the nature of the corresponding coasts of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, which are of a low and sandy soil, where the waters form lakes, shoals, and morasses, so that vessels cannot approach within a considerable distance. It will therefore be found scarcely possible to dig a permanent canal amid these shifting sands; not to mention that the shore is destitute of harbours, which must

* The ancients considered the Red Sea to be higher than the Mediterranean; and, in fact, if we observe that, from the canal of Kolzoum to the sea, the Nile has a declivity, for the space of thirty leagues, this idea will not appear so ridiculous; besides that, to me it appears probable, the level will be found at the Cape of Good Hope.

must be entirely the work of art. The country besides does not furnish a drop of fresh water; and for the supply of the inhabitants, it would be necessary to bring it from the Nile.

The most eligible and indeed only method therefore of effecting this junction, is that which has been already successfully practised at different times; which is, by making the river itself the medium of communication, for which the ground is perfectly well calculated; for Mount Mokattam suddenly terminating in the latitude of Cairo, forms only a low and semicircular mound, round which is a continued plain from the banks of the Nile, as far as the point of the Red Sea. The ancients, who early understood the advantage to be derived from this situation, adopted the idea of joining the two seas by a canal connected with the river. Strabo (lib. 17.) observes, that this first was executed under Sesostris, who reigned about the time of the Trojan war *; and this work was so considerable as to occasion it to be remarked; "that it "was a hundred cubits (or a hundred and se-"venty feet) wide, and deep enough for large "vessels." After the Greeks conquered the country, it was restored by the Ptolemies, and again renewed by Trajan. In short, even the Arabs themselves followed these examples. "In "the time of Omar ebn-el-Kattab," says the historian El Makin, "the cities of Mecca and Me-"dina suffering from famine, the Caliph order-

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* That is, according to some calculations of mine, in the time of Solomon. See *Mémoire sur la Chronologie Ancienne*, inserted in the *Journal des Savans*, of January 1782.

"ed Amrou, Governor of Egypt, to cut a ca-
" nal from the Nile to Kolzom, for the convey-
" ance of the contributions of corn and barley,
" appointed for Arabia."

It is the same canal which runs at present to Cairo, and loses itself in the country to the north-east of *Berket-el-Hadj*, or the Lake of the Pilgrims. Kolzoum, the Clysma of the Greeks, where it terminated, has been destroyed for many ages; but the name and situation still subsist in a hillock of sand, bricks, and stones, three hundred paces to the north of Suez, on the border of the sea opposite the ford which leads to the spring of El-Naba. I have been on the spot as well as M. Niebuhr, and the Arabs told me, as they did him, it was called *Kolzoum*; Danville therefore is deceived, when, copying an error of Ptolemy's, he places Clysma eight leagues more to the southward. I am of opinion that he is likewise mistaken, in supposing it the Arsinoe of Suez the ancients. This city having been situated, according to the Greeks and Arabs, to the north of Clysma, we should endeavour to trace it according to the words of Strabo, (lib. 17.) "quite at the bottom of the "gulph, as we approach Egypt," without proceeding, however, with M. Savary, as far as Adjeroud, which is too far to the westward. We ought to confine ourselves to the low country, which extends about two leagues from the bottom of the present gulph, that space being all we can reasonably suppose the sea to have retreated in seventeen hundred years.

These districts were formerly covered with towns

towns which have disappeared with the waters of the Nile; the canals which conveyed these are destroyed, for in this shifting soil they are presently filled up, both by the sands driven by the winds, and by the cavalry of the Bedouin Arabs. At present the commerce of Cairo with Suez is only carried on by means of caravans, which wait the arrival, and set out on the departure of the vessels, that is, towards the end of April, or the beginning of May, and in the course of the months of July and August. That which I accompanied in 1783, consisted of about three thousand camels, and five or six thousand men*. The merchandize consisted in wood, sails, and cordage, for the ships at Suez; in some anchors, carried each of them by four camels, iron bars, carded wool, and lead; it likewise carried bales of cloth, and barrels of cochineal, corn, barley, beans, Turkish piastres, Venetian sequins, and Imperial dollars. All these commodities were destined for Djedda, Mecca, and Moka, where they were to be bartered for Indian goods, and the coffee of Arabia, which forms the principal article of the returns. There was besides a great number of pilgrims, who preferred the voyage by sea to a land journey; and it also carried the neces-

 sary

* They remained upwards of forty days assembled, deferring the departure for various reasons; among others, on account of the unlucky days, in which respect the Turks are as superstitious as the Romans formerly were. At length they set out on the 27th of July, and arrived the 29th at Suez, having journeyed twenty-nine hours by the route of the Haoutat Arabs, a league farther to the south than the Lake of the Pilgrims.

ſary proviſions, ſuch as rice, meat, wood, and even water; for no place in the world is more deſtitute of every neceſſary than Suez. From the tops of the terraces, the eye, ſurveying the ſandy plain to the north-weſt, the white rocks of Arabia to the eaſt, or the ſea, and the Mountain Mokattam, to the ſouth, cannot diſcern even a ſingle tree, or the ſmalleſt ſpot of verdure. Suez preſents no proſpect but extenſive yellow ſands, or a lake of green water; the ruinous condition of the houſes heightens this melancholy ſcenery. The only water which can be drunk is brought from *El-Naba*, or the *ſpring*, ſituated at the diſtance of three hours journey on the Arabian ſhore; but it is ſo brackiſh that without a mixture of rum, it is inſupportable to Europeans. The ſea might furniſh a quantity of ſhell and other fiſh; but the Arabs ſeldom attempt fiſhing, at which they are far from expert; when the veſſels are gone, therefore, nobody is left at Suez, but the garriſon and governor, who is a Mamlouk, with twelve or fourteen perſons, who form his houſehold.

The fortreſs is a defenceleſs heap of ruins, which the Arabs call a citadel, becauſe it has ſix braſs four pounders, and two Greek gunners, who turn their heads aſide when they fire. The harbour is a wretched quay, where the ſmalleſt boats are unable to reach the ſhore, except at the higheſt tides. There, however, the merchandize is embarked, to convey it over the banks of ſand, to the veſſels which anchor in the road. This road, ſituated a league from the

the town, is separated from it by a shore which is left dry at low water; it has no works for its defence, so that the vessels which I have seen there, to the number of eight-and-twenty at a time, might be attacked without opposition; for the ships themselves are incapable of resistance, none having any other artillery than four rusty swivels. Their number diminishes every year, since, by continually coasting along a shore full of shoals, one out of nine, at least, is shipwrecked. In 1783, one of them, having anchored at *El-Tor*, to take in water, was surprised by the Arabs, while the crew were sleeping on shore. After plundering it of fifteen hundred bags of coffee, they abandoned the vessel to the wind, which threw it upon the coast. The dock at Suez is ill adapted to repair such damages; scarcely do they build a *cayasse* in three years. Besides that the sea, by accumulating the sand upon that coast, will at last choak up the entrance, and effect the same change at Suez, which has already taken place at Kolzoum and Arsinoe.

Were Egypt governed by a wise administration, advantage might be then taken of that accident to build another town in the same road, which might be done on a causeway of only seven or eight feet in height, as the tide usually rises no more than three feet and a half; the canal of the Nile would be cleansed and repaired, and the five hundred thousand livres (near twenty-one thousand pounds), paid annually to the escort of the Arabs of Haouatat and Ayaidi entirely saved: in short, to avoid the very dangerous

gerous bar of the Bogaz of Roſetta, the canal of Alexandria would be rendered navigable, from whence the merchandize might be conveyed immediately to the Porte. But ſuch are not the cares of the preſent government. The ſmall degree of encouragement it grants to commerce is not even founded on rational motives; if it be tolerated, it is merely becauſe it furniſhes a means of gratifying rapacity, and is a ſource from whence tyranny perpetually derives profit, without conſidering how ſoon it may be exhauſted. The Turks do not even know how to make advantage of the eagerneſs of the Europeans to communicate with India. In vain have the Engliſh and French attempted to concert with them a plan for opening ſuch a paſſage; they either inflexibly refuſe, or diſcourage every application. We ſhould be wrong in flattering ourſelves with any durable ſucceſs; for even were treaties concluded, the revolutions which, between evening and morning, ſo often alter the face of affairs at Cairo, would render them of no effect, as was the caſe with the treaty concluded in 1775, between Mohammad Bey and the Governor of Bengal. Such beſides is the avarice and treachery of the Mamlouks, that they would always find pretexts enough to haraſs the merchants, and would augment the duties on goods, in contempt of every engagement.

The taxes on coffee are at this moment enormous. The *farde*, or bale of this commodity, weighing from three hundred and ſeventy to three hundred and ſeventy-five pounds, and coſting

costing at Moka, forty-five pattaques,* (nine pounds sixteen and eight-pence), pays in *bahr*, or sea duties, six pounds two shillings and six-pence, besides an addition of two pounds seventeen shillings and six-pence, laid on in 1783.† So that on adding the six per cent. collected at Djedda, we shall find that the duties are as much as the prime cost.‡

CHAP.

* This is the name given by the merchants of Provence to the dollar of the empire, after the Arabs, who call it *Rial aboutaka*, or *Father of the window*, on account of the arms on the reverse, which, according to them, resemble a window. The dollar is worth four and four-pence half-penny.

† In May 1783, the fleet of Djedda, consisting of twenty-eight sail, four of which were vessels pierced for sixty guns, brought near thirty thousand sardes of coffee, which, at the rate of 370 pounds the sarde, amount to eleven millions one hundred thousand pounds weight, or one hundred and one thousand quintals; but it must be observed, that the demand of that year was more than a third greater than usual. Accordingly, we must only reckon, on an average, from sixty to seventy thousand quintals annually. The sarde, paying nine pounds duty at Suez, the thirty thousand sardes of 1783 produced to the custom-house two hundred and seventy thousand pounds.

‡ At Moka - - - - - 16 livres.
At Suez - - - - - 147
Extra duty - - - - 69

Total of duties - - 232
Prime cost - - - - 236

Total - - - - 468

adding to which the freight, losses and waste, it is not astonishing that the Moka coffee should sell at one and ten-pence, and two and a penny the pound in Egypt, and for half a crown at Marseilles.

CHAP. XV.

Of the Custom-houses and Imposts.

THE collector of the Customs is, in Egypt, as in all Turkey, one of the principal offices of government. He who exercises it is at once the comptroller and farmer-general: All the duties on entry, exports, and the circulation of commodities, depend on him. He names all the subalterns who collect them. To this he adds the *paltes*, or exclusive privileges of the natron of Terane, the kali of Alexandria, the cassia of the Thebais, the senna of Nubia, and, in a word, is the despot of commerce, which he regulates at his pleasure. His office is never held for longer than a year. The price of his contract in 1783, was one thousand purses, which, at the rate of five hundred piasters the purse, and fifty sols the piaster, make twelve hundred and fifty thousand livres, (above fifty-thousand pounds.) It is true we must include among the conditions of his farm eventual extortions, or casual demands; that is, when Mourad Bey, or Ibrahim, are in want of five hundred thousand livres, they send for the commissioner of the customs, who cannot dispense with advancing them that sum; but he receives a warrant in return, which empowers him to levy this extortion on commerce, for which he taxes, in a friendly way, the different corps or nations, such

such as the Franks, the Barbary Arabs, and the Turks; and this frequently turns out not a little to his advantage. In some provinces of Turkey, he has also the collecting of the *miri*, or tax levied only on the lands. But in Egypt, this administration is entrusted with the Copt writers, who exercise it under the direction of the secretary of the ruling Bey. These writers have registers of each village, and are employed in receiving payments, and accounting for them to the treasury; they frequently profit by the ignorance of the peasants, in not carrying to account the partial payments, and by obliging them to discharge the debt a second time: they often sell the oxen, the buffaloes, and even the mat on which these wretches lie; and it may be truly said, that they are agents every way worthy of their masters. The ordinary tax should amount to thirty-three piasters for each *feddan*; that is, to near eighty-three livres (three pounds nine and two-pence) for every yoke of oxen; but this is sometimes carried, by abuse, as far as two hundred livres, (four pounds six and sixpence.) It is calculated that the whole produce of the miri, collected as well in money as in corn, barley, beans, rice, &c. may amount to from forty-six to fifty millions of French money (about two millions sterling) when bread sells at one *fadda* the *rotle*, that is, at five liards (something more than a half-penny) the pound of fourteen ounces.

But to return to the custom-houses; the offices were held formerly, according to the ancient custom, by the Jews; but Ali Bey, having completely

among the thorns, or any drink but his own urine. At length, on the third day, perceiving the water of *Berket-el-Hadj*, he ſtrove to make towards it; but he had already fallen three times through weakneſs, and would doubtleſs have remained where he laſt fell, but for a peaſant, mounted on a camel, who ſaw him at a great diſtance. This charitable man conveyed him to his lodging, and took care of him for three days with the utmoſt humanity. At the expiration of that time, the merchants of Cairo, apprized of his misfortune, procured him a conveyance to that city, where he arrived in the moſt deplorable condition. His body was one entire wound, his breath cadaverous, and he had ſcarcely a ſpark of life remaining. Through great care and attention, however, Mr Charles Magallon, who received him in his houſe, had the ſatisfaction of ſaving him, and even of reeſtabliſhing his health. Much was ſaid at the time of the barbarity of the Arabs, who notwithſtanding killed no one: at preſent we may venture to blame the imprudence of the Europeans, who conducted themſelves throughout the whole affair like madmen. So great was the diſcord among them, and they had carried their negligence ſo far, as not to have a ſingle piſtol fit for uſe. All their arms were at the bottom of their cheſts. Beſides, it would ſeem that the Arabs did not act merely from their uſual motives: well informed perſons aſſert that the plan was concerted at Conſtantinople, by *the Engliſh Eaſt-India Company's agents*, who ſaw, with a jealous eye, individuals entering into competition

competition with them for the traffic of Bengal: and what has tranſpired in the courſe of the enquiries into this affair, confirms the truth of the aſſertion. But to return to our ſubject.

The ſtaple article of French trade in Egypt conſiſts, as throughout the Levant, in light cloths of Languedoc, called *Firſt Londrins*, and *Second Londrins*. They ſell annually, upon an average, between nine hundred and a thouſand bales. The profit is from thirty-five to forty per cent, but their drawing and redrawing cauſing a loſs of from twenty to twenty-five, the net produce is only fifteen per cent. The other articles of importation are iron, lead, groceries, cochineal, ſome laces, and Lyons ſtuffs; various articles of mercery, dollars and ſequins.

Theſe are exchanged for coffee of Arabia, African gums, coarſe cottons, manufactured at Manouf, and which are re-ſhipped to the French Weſt-Indies, untanned hides, ſafranum, ſal ammoniac, and rice.* Theſe articles rarely balance the exports, and the merchant is at a loſs for his returns, not however from a want of a variety of productions, as Egypt furniſhes corn, rice, doura, millet, ſeſamum, cotton, flax, ſenna, caſſia, ſugar-canes, nitre, natrum, ſal ammoniac, honey, and wax; ſilks alſo and wine might be produced: but induſtry is not exerted, and will not be till the cultivator is allowed to enjoy the fruits of his labour.

* The exportation of corn is prohibited, and Pococke remarked in 1737, this meaſure as very detrimental to agriculture.

The average of French importation is eſtimated at three millions of livres (a hundred and twenty-five thouſand pounds). France maintained a Conſul at Cairo till 1777, when he was withdrawn on account of the expence. He was transferred to Alexandria, and the merchants, who ſuffered him to go without demanding an indemnity, remained at Cairo at the peril of their lives and fortunes. Their ſituation, which has not changed, is nearly ſimilar to that of the Dutch at Nangazaki; that is to ſay, ſhut up in a confined place, they live among themſelves, with ſcarcely any external communication; they even dread it, and go as little out as poſſible, to avoid the inſults of the common people, who hate the very name of the Franks, and the inſolence of the Mamlouks, who force them to diſmount from their aſſes in the middle of the ſtreets. In this kind of habitual impriſonment, they tremble every inſtant, leſt the plague ſhould oblige them entirely to ſhut themſelves up in their houſes, or ſome revolt expoſe their quarter to be plundered; leſt the chief of ſome party ſhould make a pecuniary demand,* or the Beys oblige them to furniſh them with what they want, which is always attended with conſiderable danger.

They have equal uneaſineſs, with the management of their mercantile affairs. Obliged to ſell on credit, they are rarely paid at the ſtipulated time. There are no regulations even for bills of

* It has been obſerved, that theſe extortions amount, annually, on an average, to ſixty-three thouſand livres (two thouſand ſix hundred and twenty-five pounds).

of exchange, no recourſe can be had to juſtice, becauſe juſtice there is always worſe than bankruptcy. Every thing depends on conſcience, and that conſcience has been ſenſibly loſing its influence for ſome time paſt. Payments are delayed for whole years; frequently they receive no payment at all, and great deductions are almoſt always made. The Chriſtians, who are their principal correſpondents, are, in this reſpect, more faithleſs even than the Turks; and it is remarkable that, throughout the empire, the character of the Chriſtians is greatly inferior to that of the Muſſulmen; they are reduced, however, to the neceſſity of letting every thing paſs through ſuch hands. Add to this, that it is impoſſible ever to realize their capital; and to obtain an outſtanding debt they are under a neceſſity of giving ſtill greater credit. For all theſe reaſons, Cairo is the moſt precarious and moſt diſagreeable factory of the Levant. Fifteen years ago, there were nine French mercantile houſes at Cairo; in 1785, they were reduced to three, and ſhortly perhaps there will not remain one. The Chriſtians of Syria, ſettled ſome time ago at Leghorn, have given another fatal blow to the French factories at this place, by the immediate correſpondence they carry on with their countrymen; and the Grand Duke of Tuſcany has done every thing in his power to encourage their trade, by putting them on the ſame footing with his other ſubjects.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the City of Cairo.

GRAND Cairo, of which I have already treated ſo fully, is a place of ſo great conſequence, that it well deſerves a ſtill more particular deſcription. This capital does not, in the country bear the name of *El-Kahera*, given it by its founder; the Arabs know it only by that of *Maſr*, which has no known ſignification, but which anciently ſeems to have been the eaſtern name of lower Egypt*.

This city is ſituated on the eaſtern bank of the Nile, about a quarter of a league from the river, which deprives it of a great advantage; for the loſs of which the canal, which comes up to it, cannot compenſate, ſince it contains no running water, except in the time of the inundation.

When *Grand Cairo* is mentioned, the idea that naturally preſents itſelf is that of a capital, at leaſt, equal to thoſe of Europe; but if we reflect that, even among ourſelves, towns have only begun to be rendered convenient and elegant within theſe hundred years, we ſhall eaſily believe that, in a country where nothing has been improved

* *Maſr* has the ſame conſonants as *Meſr*-aim, uſed by the Hebrews; which, on account of its plural form, ſeems properly to denote the inhabitants of the Delta, while thoſe of the Thebais are called *Beni Kous*, or children of Kous.

improved since the tenth century, they must partake of the common barbarism; and, indeed, we shall find that Cairo contains none of those public or private edifices, those regular squares, or well-built streets, in which the architect displays his genius. Its environs are full of heaps of dirt, formed by the rubbish which is accumulating every day*, while the multitude of tombs, and the stench of the common sewers, are at once offensive to the smell and the sight. Within the walls, the streets are winding and narrow; and as they are not paved, the crowds of men, camels, asses, and dogs, with which they are thronged, raise a very disagreeable dust; individuals often water their doors, and to this dust succeeds mud and pestiferous exhalations. Contrary to the general custom of the east, the houses have two and three stories, over which is a terrace of stone or tiles; in general they are of earth and bricks badly burnt; the rest are of soft stone, of a fine grain, procured from the neighbouring Mount Mokattam. All these houses have the appearance of prisons, for they have no light from the street; as it is extremely dangerous to have many windows in such a country: they even take the precaution to make the entering door very low. The rooms within are ill contrived. Among the great, however, are to be found a few ornaments and conveniencies, their vast halls, especially, in which water spouts up into marble basons,

* Selim the Sultan had appointed boats for carrying it to the sea; but this regulation had been laid aside, to divert the money to other purposes.

ſons, are peculiarly well adapted to the climate. The paved floor, inlaid with marble and coloured earthen ware, is covered with mats and matraſſes, and over all is ſpread a rich carpet, on which they ſit croſs-legged. Around the wall is a ſort of ſofa, with cuſhions, to ſupport the back and elbows; and above, at the height of ſeven or eight feet, a range of ſhelves, decked out with China and Japaneſe porcelain. The walls, naked in other reſpects, are chequered with ſentences extracted from the Koran, and painted foliage and flowers, with which alſo the porticoes of the Beys are covered; the windows have neither glaſs, nor moving ſaſhes, but only an open lattice work, which frequently coſts more than our glazing. The light enters from the inner courts, from whence the ſycamores reflect a verdure pleaſing to the eye. An opening to the north, or at the top of the ceiling, admits a refreſhing breeze, while, by a whimſical contradiction, they wrap themſelves up in warm woollen cloths and furs. The rich vainly hope by this means to eſcape diſeaſe; but the common people, clad in blue ſhirts and hard mats, are leſs liable to take cold, and are bleſſed with a better ſtate of health.

Sect. I.

Of the Population of Cairo and Egypt.

The population of Cairo has been a ſubject of frequent diſpute. If we may credit the head officer of the cuſtoms, Anthony Faraoun, cited by Baron de Tott, it is nearly ſeven hundred thouſand

thousand souls, including Boulak, a port and suburb detached from the city; but all calculations of the number of inhabitants in Turkey are arbitrary, as no registers are kept of births, deaths, or marriages. The Mahometans have even superstitious prejudices against numbering their people. The Christians may indeed be estimated by means of their tickets of capitation*. All we know with certainty is, that, according to the plan of M. Niebuhr, taken in 1761, Cairo is three leagues in circumference, which is about the same with Paris by the line of the Boulevards. Within this space is comprised a number of gardens, courts, vacant grounds and ruins. Now, if Paris, within the Boulevards, does not contain above seven hundred thousand inhabitants, though the houses are five stories high, it is difficult to conceive that Cairo, where they are only two stories, can contain more than two hundred and fifty thousand. It is equally impracticable to form a just estimate of the population of all Egypt. Nevertheless, as it is known that the number of towns and villages does not exceed two thousand three hundred, and the number of inhabitants in each of them, one with another, including Cairo itself, is not more than a thousand, the total cannot be more than two millions three hundred thousand. D'Anville mentions two lists of villages in Egypt; one, which is the last century, gives two thousand six hundred and ninety-six towns and villages; the other, of the middle of the present century, two thousand four hundred and ninety-five

* Called *karadj*; *k* is here the Spanish *jota*.

five, nine hundred and fifty-seven of which are in the Said, and one thousand four hundred and thirty-nine in the Delta: that I have given is of 1783.

The cultivable lands, according to Danville, contain two thousand one hundred square leagues, whence there results, for each square league, one thousand one hundred and forty-two inhabitants. This number, which is greater than even that of France, may lead us to imagine that Egypt is not so depopulated as has been represented; but if we observe that the lands never lie fallow, but are continually productive, it must be allowed that its population is exceedingly small compared to what it was, and yet may be.

One of the singularities which strike a stranger most at Cairo, is the great number of ugly dogs which roam about the streets, and the kites which skim over the houses, with frequent and doleful cries. The Mussulmen kill neither of these, though they are both held to be unclean*; on the contrary, they often throw them the fragments of their tables: and devotees even endow charitable foundations of bread and water for the dogs. These animals have besides the resource of the common sewers, which, however, does not prevent them from suffering greatly by hunger and thirst; but it is very astonishing that these extremities never occasion madness. Prosper Alpinus has already made this remark.

* Turtle-doves are extremely numerous, and build their nests in the houses; they are not annoyed even by the children.

remark in his treatiſe on the Phyſic of the Egyptians. Canine madneſs is equally unknown in Syria; a name for this malady, however, is to be found among the original words of the Arabic language.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Diſeaſes of Egypt.

SECT. I.

Of Blindneſs.

THIS malady, which has been ſaid ſo much of, is not the only remarkable one in Egypt; there are others which deſerve equal remark.

Yet nothing has a more extraordinary appearance to a ſtranger than the prodigious number of perſons whoſe ſight is either loſt or impaired, and which is ſo great, that out of a hundred perſons I have met while walking the ſtreets of Cairo, twenty have been quite blind, ten wanting an eye, and twenty others have had their eyes red, purulent, or blemiſhed. Almoſt every one wears a fillet, a token of an approaching or convaleſcent opthalmy; but nothing aſtoniſhed me more than the indifference and apathy with which they ſupport ſo dreadful a misfortune. *It was decreed*, ſays the Muſſulman: *praiſe be to God! God has willed it*, ſays the Chriſtian,

tian, *bleſſed be his name.* This reſignation is undoubtedly the beſt reſource when the evil has happened; but, as it prevents an enquiry into the cauſe of the diſorder, it precludes the diſcovery of its cure. Some phyſicians among us have written on this diſtemper, but from not being acquainted with all the circumſtances, could not treat it with ſufficient accuracy. I ſhall therefore ſubjoin a few remarks for the uſe of thoſe who may inveſtigate the ſubject in future.

1ſt. Defluxions on the eyes are not confined to Egypt alone; they are alſo frequent in Syria, with this difference, that they are there leſs general; and it is remarkable that it is only the inhabitants on the ſea-coaſt who are thus diſeaſed.

2d. In Cairo, which is continually full of filth, theſe diſorders are more prevalent than in all the reſt of Egypt*. The common people are more liable to them than perſons in eaſy circumſtances, and the natives more than foreigners. The Mamlouks are rarely attacked by them; and the peaſants of the Delta, are more ſubject to them than the Bedoum Arabs.

3d. Theſe defluxions are not confined to any particular ſeaſon, notwithſtanding what is ſaid by Proſper Alpinus. They are an endemial diſorder, common to every month of the year, and to every age.

In reaſoning from theſe facts, it appears to me that we cannot admit the ſoutherly winds as

* It ſhould be obſerved, however, that the blind people of the villages come and reſide in the *moſque of Hakem*, where they have a ſort of hoſpital.

as a principal cauſe, ſince, in that caſe, this complaint would be peculiar to the month of April, and the Bedouins be affected with it like the peaſants; nor can we aſcribe theſe maladies to any ſubtile duſt with which the air is filled, becauſe the peaſants are more expoſed to this than the inhabitants of towns; the cuſtom of ſleeping on the terraces ſeems a much more probable cauſe*; but it is neither confined to this country, nor adequate to the effects aſcribed to it; for in countries remote from the ſea, as the valley of Balbec, the Diarbekar, the plains of Hauran, and the mountains, the inhabitants ſleep alſo on their terraces, and yet their ſight is not injured. If, therefore, at Cairo, throughout the Delta, and on the coaſt of Syria, it is dangerous to ſleep in the open air, this air muſt acquire ſome noxious quality from the vicinity of the ſea: and this quality doubtleſs is moiſture combined with heat, which then becomes a firſt principle of theſe diſorders. The ſaline quality of the air, ſo remarkable in the Delta, contributes ſtill more to this by its irritating and itching effects, which I have myſelf experienced.

The common fair of the Egyptians ſeems alſo to be a powerful cauſe. The cheeſe, ſour milk, honey, confection grapes, green fruits, and raw vegetables, which are the ordinary food of the people, produce in the ſtomach a diſorder, which phyſicians have obſerved to affect the ſight; the raw onions, eſpecially, which they devour in great quantities, have a peculiar heating qua-

* See De Tott's Memoirs, part IV. T.

lity, as the Monks of Syria made me remark on myſelf. Bodies thus nouriſhed, abound in corrupted humours, which are conſtantly endeavouring a diſcharge. Diverted from the ordinary channels, by habitual perſpiration, they fly to the exterior parts, and fix themſelves where they find the leaſt reſiſtance. They therefore naturally attack the head, becauſe the Egyptians, by ſhaving it once a week, and covering it with a prodigiouſly hot head-dreſs, principally attract to that the perſpiration; and if the head receives ever ſo ſlight an impreſſion of cold, on being uncovered, this perſpiration is ſuppreſſed, and falls upon the teeth, or ſtill more readily on the eyes, as being the tendereſt part. On every freſh cold this organ is weakened, and at length entirely deſtroyed. A diſpoſition to this diſorder, tranſmited by generation, becomes a freſh cauſe of malady; and hence the natives are more expoſed to it than ſtrangers. It will appear more probable that the exceſſive perſpiration of the head is a principal cauſe, when we conſider that the ancient Egyptians, who went bare headed, are not mentioned by phyſicians as being ſo much afflicted with ophthalmies*; and that the Arabs of the deſert, who are generally uncovered, eſpecially when young, are likewiſe exempt from them.

SECT.

* Hiſtory, however, informs us that ſeveral of the Pharaohs died blind.

SECT. II.

Of the Small Pox.

BLINDNESS in Egypt is frequently a conſequence of the ſmall pox. This diſorder, which is very fatal in that country, is not treated after a good method. During the three firſt days, *debs*, or confection of grapes, honey, and ſugar, are adminiſtered to the ſick, and, after the ſeventh, they are allowed milk, meat, and ſalt-fiſh, as if they were in full health; at the period of ſuppuration, they are never purged, and they particularly avoid waſhing their eyes, though they are full of pus, and their eyelids cloſed by the glutinous matter; this operation they never perform till after forty days, and, in that time, the pus, by irritating the ball, has produced an inflammation which affects the whole eye. Inoculation is not unknown among them, but it is little practiſed; nor is it more in uſe among the Syrians and the inhabitants of Anadolia, who have long been no ſtrangers to its. The operation is performed by the inſertion of a thread into the fleſh, or by making the patient inhale, or ſwallow, the powder of dried puſtules.

A regimen ſo improper has certainly far more pernicious effects than the climate, which is by no means unhealthy *. To unwholeſome food eſpecially, muſt we attribute both the deformity of the beggars, and the miſerable appearance of

* The Mamlouks afford a proof of this, who, from wholeſome diet, and a proper regimen, enjoy the moſt robuſt ſtate of health.

of the children at Cairo, which are no where to be met with ſo miſhapen and wretched. Their hollow eyes, their pale and puffed faces, ſwollen bellies, meagre extremities, and yellow ſkins, make them always ſeem as if they had not long to live. Their ignorant mothers pretend that this is the effect of the *evil eye* of ſome envious perſon, which has bewitched them; and this ancient prejudice * is ſtill general in Turkey; but the real cauſe is the badneſs of their food. In ſpite of the *Taliſmans*, † therefore, and incredible number of them periſh, and no city is more fatal to the population of the country around than Grand Cairo.

Another very common diſtemper at Cairo, is that which the vulgar there call the *bleſſed evil*, and which we alſo improperly term the *Nepolitan diſeaſe*: one half of Cairo is infected with it. The greateſt part of the inhabitants believe it proceeds from *fright*, from *witchcraft*, or from *uncleanlineſs*. Some of them ſuſpect the real cauſe; but as that is connected with a ſubject on which they are remarkably reſerved, they chuſe not to mention it. This *bleſſed evil* is very difficult to cure; mercury, under whatever form adminiſtered, generally fails: ſudorific vegetables ſucceed better, without being however infallible; happily, the virus is not very active, on account of the great natural and artificial

* *Neſcio quis teneros oculus mihi faſcinat agnos.* Virgil.

† We often ſee, in Egypt, little pieces of red ſtuff, or branches of coral, and coloured glaſs, hanging on the faces of children, and even of grown perſons. Theſe are ſuppoſed, by their colour and motion, to fix the firſt glance of the *envious*, for it is that, they ſay, which *ſtrikes*,

artificial perſpiration. We ſee there, as in Spain, old men carrying this diſorder about them to the age of eighty. But its effects are fatal to children born with the infection, the danger alſo is imminent for ſuch as carry it into a cold country; for it there never fails to make a rapid progreſs, and ſhews itſelf always more inveterate from this tranſplantation. In Syria, at Damaſcus, and in the mountains, it is the more dangerous, as the winter is very ſevere there: when neglected, it terminates in all its well-known ſymptoms, as I myſelf witneſſed in two inſtances.

One troubleſome complaint which is peculiar to Egypt, and returns every year, is a cutaneous eruption. Towards the end of June, or the beginning of July, the body is covered with red ſpots and pimples, the ſmarting of which is very troubleſome. Several phyſicians, perceiving that this eruption regularly happened at the time of the new waters, have been of opinion, that it was occaſioned by the ſalts with which they ſuppoſed theſe waters impregnated; but the exiſtence of theſe ſalts is not proved, and a more ſimple reaſon may be aſſigned. I have already ſaid, that the waters of the Nile become corrupted, towards the end of April, in the bed of the river, and, when drunk, produce humours of a malignant quality. When the new water arrives, it occaſions a ſort of fermentation in the blood, which ſeparates the vicious humours, and expels them towards the ſkin, whether they are invited by the perſpira-

tion. It has the effect of a real purgative deputation, and is never unwholesome.

Another disease, much too common at Cairo, is a swelling of the testicles, which frequently issues in an enormous hydrocele. It is observed to attack, principally, the Greeks and Copts, and hence arises the suspicion that it is occasioned by the great quantity of oil which they make use of two-thirds of the year. It is conjectured, also, that the hot-baths contribute to it, the immoderate use of which produces other effects not less injurious to health. I shall remark on this occasion, that in Syria, as well as in Egypt, constant experience has proved that brandy distilled from common figs, or from the fruit of the sycamore tree, as well as that extracted from dates, and the fruit of the nopal, has a most immediate effect on the testicles, which it renders hard and painful the third or fourth day after it has been drank; and if the use of it be not discontinued, the disorder degenerates into a confirmed hydrocele.

Brandy distilled from raisins has not the same bad effect; it is always mixed with anniseeds, and is very strong, being distilled no less than three times. The Christians of Syria, and the Copts of Egypt, make great use of it; the latter, especially, drink whole bottles of it at their supper: I imagined this an exaggeration, but I have myself had ocular proofs of its truth, though nothing could equal my astonishment that such excesses do not produce instant death, or, at least, every bad effect of the most insensible drunkenness.

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The ſpring of Egypt, which is the ſummer of our climates, is accompanied by malignant fevers, which ſoon arrive at a criſis. A French phyſician, who has had opportunities to obſerve a great number of them, has remarked, that the bark, given in the intermiſſions, in doſes of two or three ounces, has frequently ſaved the patient at the laſt extremity. The next day he always adminiſters a clyſter to expel the bark. As ſoon as the diſeaſe appears, the patient muſt be rigorouſly reſtricted to a vegetable acid regimen; meat is prohibited, fiſh likewiſe, and above all, eggs; the latter are a ſort of poiſon in Egypt. In this country, as in Syria, experience proves that bleeding is always more injurious than beneficial, even in caſes where it appears to be moſt neceſſary: the reaſon of which is, that bodies nouriſhed with unwholeſome aliments, ſuch as green fruits, raw vegetables, cheeſe and olives, have, in fact, but little blood, and a great quantity of humours. The Egyptians are in general of a bilious habit, as appears from their eyes and their black eye-brows, their brown complexion, and meagre make. Their habitual malady is the cholic; and almoſt all of them frequently complain of a ſourneſs in the throat, and an acid nauſea; emetics and cream of tartar are therefore ſucceſsful in general.

The malignant fevers frequently become epidemic, in which caſe they are apt to be miſtaken for the plague, of which I ſhall next ſpeak.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of the Plague.

SEVERAL writers have attempted to eſtabliſh an opinion that the plague originates in Egypt; but this ſuppoſition, founded on vague prejudices, ſeems to be diſproved by facts. The European merchants who have been ſettled for many years at Alexandria, concur with the Egyptians in declaring that the plague never proceeds from the interior parts of the country but firſt makes its appearance, on the coaſt, at Alexandria; from Alexandria it paſſes to Roſetta, from Roſetta to Cairo, from Cairo to Damietta, and through the reſt of the Delta. They further obſerve, that it is invariably preceded by the arrival of ſome veſſel coming from Smyrna or Conſtantinople; and that if the plague has been violent in one of theſe cities during the ſummer, the danger is the greater for themſelves the following winter. It appears certain, that it really originates from Conſtantinople, where it is perpetuated by the abſurd negligence of the Turks, which is ſo great that they publicly ſell the effects of perſons dead of that diſtemper. The ſhips which go to Alexandria never fail to carry furs and woollen cloths purchaſed on theſe occaſions, which they expoſe to ſale in the Bazar of the city, and thereby ſpread the contagion. The Greeks who deal in theſe goods are almoſt always the firſt victims. By degrees the infection reaches Roſetta, and at length Cairo, following the

uſual road by which the trade is carried on. As ſoon as it is confirmed, the European merchants ſhut themſelves and their domeſtics up in their *Kans*, and have no further external communication with the city. Their proviſions, depoſited at the gate of the Kan, are received there by the porter, who takes them up with iron tongs, and plunges them into a barrel of water provided for this purpoſe. If it is neceſſary to ſpeak to any one, they always keep at ſuch a diſtance as to prevent touching with their cloathes, or breathing on one another; by which means they preſerve themſelves from this dreadful calamity, unleſs by ſome accidental neglect of theſe precautions. Some years ago, a cat which came by one of the terraces into the houſes of our merchants at Cairo, infected two of them, with the plague, which proved fatal to one of them.

It is eaſy to convey what a tireſome ſtate of impriſonment this muſt be: it continues for three or four months, during which time they have no other amuſement than walking, in the evening, on the terraces, and playing cards.

There are ſeveral very remarkable varieties obſerveable in the plague. At Conſtantinople it prevails during the ſummer, and is greatly weakened, or entirely ceaſes, in the winter. In Egypt, on the contrary, it is moſt violent in winter, and infallibly ends in the month of June. This apparent contrariety may be explained on the ſame principle. The winter deſtroys the plague at Conſtantinople, becauſe the cold there is very ſevere, and the ſummer

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revives it, becauſe the heat is very humid, on account of the ſeas, foreſts, and adjacent mountains. In Egypt, the winter nouriſhes the plague, becauſe it is mild and humid; but the ſummer deſtroys it, becauſe it is hot and dry. It ſeems to act on it as on fleſh meat, which it does not ſuffer to corrupt. Heat is not prejudicial, but as it is combined with humidity. Of Cairo, it is obſerved, that the water-carriers, who are continually wet with the freſh water they carry in ſkins on their backs, are never infected with the plague; but in this caſe it is *lotion*, and not humidity. Egypt is afflicted with the plague every fourth or fifth year, and the ravages it cauſes would leave the country, without inhabitants were it not for the great numbers of ſtrangers who reſort thither from all parts of the empire, and tend in a great meaſure to repair the loſſes in population occaſioned by its ravages.

The plague is much leſs common in Syria; five-and-twenty years have elapſed ſince it has been known there. This ariſes, no doubt, from the ſmall number of veſſels which come directly from Conſtantinople. It is remarked likewiſe, that it does not naturalize itſelf ſo eaſily to that province. When brought from the Archipelago, or even Damietta, into the harbours of Latakia, Saide, or Acre, it will not ſpread: it rather chuſes preliminary circumſtances, and a more complex route; but when it paſſes directly from Cairo to Damaſcus, all Syria is certain to partake of the infection.

The belief of predeſtination, and ſtill more the

the barbariſm of the government, have hitherto prevented the Turks from attempting to guard againſt this deſtructive diſeaſe: the ſucceſs, however, of the precautions taken by the Franks, has of late begun to make ſome impreſſion on many of them. The Chriſtians of the country who traffic with our merchants, would be diſpoſed to ſhut themſelves up like them; but this they cannot do without permiſſion from the Porte. It ſeems, indeed, as the Divan would at length pay ſome attention to this object, if it be true that an edict was iſſued laſt year for the eſtabliſhment of a Lazaretto at Conſtantinople, and three others at Smyrna, Candia, and Alexandria. The government of Tunis adopted this wiſe meaſure ſome years ago: but the Turkiſh police is every where ſo wretched, that little ſucceſs can be hoped for from theſe eſtabliſhments, notwithſtanding their extreme importance to commerce, and the ſafety of the Mediterranean ſtates. Laſt year afforded a proof of this, ſince as violent a plague as ever was known, broke out there. It was brought by veſſels coming from Conſtantinople, the maſters of which corrupted the guards, and came into port without performing quarantine.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Deſcriptive Sketch of Egypt reſumed.

THERE yet remains many obſervations to be made on Egypt, but as they are either foreign to my purpoſe, or may be included in thoſe which I ſhall have occaſion to make on Syria, I ſhall purſue them no farther, at preſent.

If the reader recollects my deſcription of the nature and aſpect of the country; if he figures to himſelf a flat plain, interſected with canals, under water during three months, marſhy and rank with vegetation for three others, and duſty and parched the remainder of the year: if he imagines a number of wretched mud-walled and brick villages, naked and ſun-burnt peaſants, buffaloes, camels, ſycamore and date-trees thinly ſcattered, lakes, cultivated fields, and vacant grounds of conſiderable extent; and adds beſides a ſun darting his rays from an azure ſky, almoſt invariably free from clouds; and winds conſtantly blowing, but not always with the ſame ſtrength, he will have formed a tolerably juſt idea of the natural aſpect of this country. He may have judged of its political ſtate from the diviſion of the inhabitants into tribes, ſects, and claſſes; from the nature of a government, which neither reſpects the perſon or property of its ſubjects; and from the abuſes of an unlimited power entruſted to a rude and licentious ſol-

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dicry. He may, in ſhort, have formed a juſt eſtimation of the ſtrength of this government, by conſidering its military eſtabliſhment, and the character of its troops, by obſerving that, throughout all Egypt and on its frontiers, there is not a ſingle fort nor redoubt, neither artillery nor engineers; and that its whole navy conſiſts in twenty-eight veſſels and cayaſſes of Suez, armed each with four ruſty ſwivels, and manned with ſailors who are ignorant even of the uſe of the compaſs.

Theſe facts will enable the reader to judge for himſelf what opinion he ought to form of this country, which I may have repreſented in a different point of view from ſome other writers. (See *De Maillet.*) He ought not to be aſtoniſhed at this diverſity; nothing can differ more than the opinions of travellers reſpecting the countries they have viſited: one will frequently decry what another has extolled; and deſcribe as a paradiſe what he who comes after him may conſider as having no charms. They are particularly reproached with this contrariety of opinions, but it is in fact common to them and their critics, ſince it is founded in the very nature of things. Notwithſtanding all our efforts, our judgments are much leſs directed by the real merits of objects, than by the impreſſions we receive, or carry with us in viewing them. Daily experience demonſtrates that foreign ideas always obtrude themſelves; and hence it is that the ſame country which appears beautiful to us at one moment, ſeems equally diſagreeable at another. Beſides that it is impoſſible to diſen-

gage ourſelves from the prejudices of early habits. The inhabitant of the mountain diſlikes the plain; the inhabitant of the plain is diſpleaſed with the mountains. The Spaniard wiſhes for a clear ſky; the Dane prefers thick weather. We admire the verdure of our fields; the Swede is better pleaſed with the whiteneſs of his ſnow; and the Laplander, tranſported from his ſmoky hut, to the groves of Chantilly would die with heat and melancholy. Every man has his peculiar taſte, according to which he judges. To an Egyptian, I conceive that Egypt is, and always will be, the moſt beautiful country upon earth. But if I may be permitted to give my judgment, from what I have myſelf ſeen, I confeſs that I cannot entertain ſo high an opinion of it. I am willing to do juſtice to its extreme fertility, to the variety of its productions, and the advantages of its ſituation for commerce; I admit that Egypt is but little ſubject to the variations of weather, which occaſion the failure of harveſts with us; that the hurricanes of America are unknown there; and that the earthquakes which have laid waſte Portugal and Italy in our days, are there extremely rare, though not without example. There was a very violent one, for inſtance, in the year 1112. I admit even that the heat, which is ſo inſupportable to Europeans, is no inconvenience to the natives; but I cannot be reconciled to the peſtiferous ſouthern blaſt, the north-eaſt winds, which are conſtantly the cauſe of violent headachs, or thoſe ſwarms of ſcorpions, gnats, and eſpecially flies, which are ſo numerous, that it

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is impoſſible to eat without running the riſk of ſwallowing them. Beſides, no country preſents ſuch a ſameneſs of aſpect. A boundleſs naked plain; an horizon every where flat and uniform; (See the Views in Norden's Antiq.) date-trees with ſlender and bare trunks, or mud-walled huts on the cauſeways, are all it offers to the eye, which no where beholds that richneſs of landſcape, that variety of objects, or diverſity of ſcenery which true taſte finds ſo delightful. No country is leſs pictureſque, leſs adapted to the pencil of the painter, or the deſcriptions of the poet: nothing can be ſeen of what conſtitutes the charm and beauty of their pictures; and it is remarkable, that neither the Arabs, nor the ancients make any mention of Egyptian poets. What indeed could an Egyptian ſing on the reed of Geſner or Theocritus? He is ſurrounded neither with limpid ſtreams, verdant lawns, nor ſolitary caves; and vallies, mountain ſides, and pendent rocks, are equal ſtrangers in his country.

Thomſon would not there have heard either the whiſtling of the winds in the foreſt, the rolling of the thunder on the mountains, or the peaceful majeſty of ancient woods: he could not have obſerved the awful tempeſt, nor the ſweet tranquillity of the ſucceeding calm. The face of nature, there eternally the ſame, preſents nothing but well fed herds, fertile fields, a muddy river, a ſea of freſh water, and villages which, riſing out of it, reſemble iſlands. Should the eye reach the horizon, we are terrified at finding nothing but ſavage deſerts, where

the wandering traveller, exhausted with fatigue and thirst, shudders at the immense space which separates him from the world. In vain he implores heaven and earth: his cries, lost in the boundless plain, are not even returned by an echo; destitute of every thing, and separated from mankind, he perishes in an agony of despair, amid a gloomy desert, without even the consolation of knowing he has excited the sympathising tear. The contrast of this melancholy scene, so near, has probably given to the cultivated fields of Egypt all their charms. The barrenness of the desert becomes a foil to the plenty of the plains, watered by the river; and the aspect of the parched sands, so totally unproductive, adds to the pleasures the country offers. These may have been more numerous in former times, and might revive under the influence of a well regulated government: but at present, the riches of nature produce not the fruits which might be expected. In vain may travellers celebrate the gardens of Rosetta and of Cairo. The Turks are strangers to the art of gardening, so much cultivated by polished nations, and despise every kind of cultivation. Throughout the empire their gardens are only wild orchards, in which trees are planted without care or art, yet have not even the merit of pleasing irregularity. In vain may they tell us of the orange-trees and cedars, which grow naturally in the fields. Accustomed as we are to combine the ideas of opulence and culture with these trees, since with us they are necessarily connected with them, we do not discover the deception.

deception. In Egypt, where they are frequent, and, as I may ſay, vulgar, they are aſſociated with the miſery of the huts they cover, and recall only the idea of poverty and deſolation. In vain do they deſcribe the Turk ſoftly repoſing under the ſhade, and happy in ſmoking his pipe without reflection. Ignorance and folly, no doubt, have their enjoyments, as well as wit and learning; but, for my own part, I confeſs I could never bring myſelf to envy the repoſe of ſlaves, or to dignify inſenſibility with the name of happineſs. I could not even have accounted for the enthuſiaſm with which ſome travellers have extolled Egypt, had I not been taught their motives by experience.

SECT. II.

Of the Exaggerations of Travellers.

IT is an ancient remark, that travellers particularly affect to boaſt of the countries through which they themſelves have travelled, inſomuch that the exaggeration of their relations having been frequently diſcovered, we have been warned by a proverb, to be on our guard againſt their falſehoods; but the error ſtill remains, becauſe the cauſes have not ceaſed. Theſe in fact originate with every one of us, and the reproach not unfrequently belongs even to thoſe who make it. For, let us obſerve a traveller, newly arrived from ſome diſtant country, and endeavouring to amuſe the idleneſs and curioſity of the company around him. The novelty of his relation procures him attention, which even ex-

to perſonal reſpect. He is loved becauſe he amuſes, and becauſe his pretenſions claſh not with thoſe of others. On his ſide, he is ſoon ſenſible that he ceaſes to be intereſting, when he can no longer raiſe new ideas. The neceſſity of ſupporting, the deſire even of increaſing this power of pleaſing, induce him to beſtow higher colouring on his pictures; he paints the greateſt objects, that they may be the more ſtriking; and his ſucceſs encourages him to proceed. He catches the enthuſiaſm of his hearers, and, ſhortly, a kind of emulation takes place between him and his auditors, by which he returns, in wondrous narrative, what he receives in admiration. The marvellous in what he has ſeen, is reflected, firſt upon himſelf, and, by a uſual conſequence, on thoſe who have heard, and in their turn relate it. Thus does vanity, which pervades every thing, become one of the cauſes of the propenſity we all have, either to believe or recount prodigies. We are beſides leſs anxious to be inſtructed than amuſed, and it is to theſe reaſons that tale-makers of every kind, owe the diſtinguiſhed rank in the eſteem of mankind, and among writers, which they hold.

The enthuſiaſm of travellers is alſo to be attributed to another cauſe. Remote from the objects which have given us pleaſure, the imagination takes fire; abſence again inflames deſire, and the ſatiety of ſurrounding enjoyments beſtows a new charm on whatever is no longer within our reach. We regret a country from which we were often anxious to eſcape; and pleaſe ourſelves with the remembrance of places

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in which, were we there, we could not bear to remain. Travellers who have only paſſed thro' Egypt, are not to be ranked in this claſs, as they have not time to loſe the illuſion of novelty; but this remark applies to whoever has made a long reſidence in the country. Our merchants know it; and have made a very juſt obſervation on this ſubject: they remark that thoſe among them, who have experienced the greateſt inconveniencies from reſiding in a foreign country, are no ſooner returned to France, than every thing diſagreeable is effaced from their memory; their recollection aſſumes cheerful colours, and in two years after, one would not imagine they had ever been there. "Do you "ſtill think properly of us, and our ſituation?" wrote one who ſtill reſides at Cairo to me lately: "Do you retain juſt ideas of this place of miſe-"ry; for we have experienced that all thoſe "who return to Europe, ſo far forget them as "to aſtoniſh us?" Such general and ſuch powerful cauſes would not have failed to produce their uſual effect upon myſelf, had I not taken particular pains to guard myſelf againſt them, and to retain my former impreſſions, in order to give my deſcriptions the only merit they can have, that of truth. And yet none have leſs reaſon than I to be diſſatisfied with Egypt; I experienced from our merchants in that country the utmoſt generoſity and politeneſs; I never met with any diſagreeable accident, nor was even obliged to alight in reverence of the Mamlouks. It is true that, though it is held diſgraceful, I always walked on foot in the ſtreets.

But it is now time to proceed to objects more generally interesting; yet, as the reader would not pardon me were I to leave Egypt without mentioning the ruins and the pyramids, I shall bestow a few words on that subject.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Ruins and the Pyramids.

IN a former part of my work I have explained how much the constant difficulty of travelling in Egypt, which has increased of late years, is unfavourable to researches into antiquities. For want of means, and above all of favourable circumstances, we are reduced to be content with seeing what others have already seen, and to relate nothing but what they have already published. For this reason, I shall not repeat what has been repeated more than once in Paul Lucas, Maillet, Sicard, Pocock, Greaves, Norden, and Niebuhr, and still more lately in the Letters of M. Savary. I shall restrict myself to a few general remarks.

The pyramids of Djiza afford a striking example of the difficulty which, as I have already mentioned, attends the making of observations. Though only four leagues distant from Cairo, where the Franks reside, though they have been visited by a crowd of travellers, their true dimensions are not yet known with certainty. Several times has their height been measured by

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bottom, it would be poſſible to form the firſt channel, which deſcends obliquely, the gallery which aſcends in the ſame manner, and the ſepulchral chamber at the extremity. Norden would furniſh the beſt deſcription; but ſuch a model muſt be formed by an artiſt accuſtomed to work of the kind.

The ledge of rock which ſerves as a foundation to the pyramids does not riſe more than forty or fifty feet above the level of the plain. The ſtone of which it conſiſts, is, as I have ſaid, white and calcareous, of a grain reſembling that of the ſtone known in ſome provinces of France, by the name of *Rairie*. That of the pyramids is of a ſimilar nature. It was imagined, at the beginning of the preſent century, on the authority of Herodotus, that the materials of which they have been built had been brought from a diſtance; but travellers, obſerving the reſemblance I am ſpeaking of, think it more natural to conclude they were taken from the rock itſelf; and, at this day, the narrative of Herodotus is treated as a fable, and ſuch a removal of the ſtones as an abſurdity. It has been calculated that the levelling of the rock would furniſh nearly enough, and the deficiency is ſupplied by ſuppoſed ſubterranean cavities, which are magnified at pleaſure. But if the ancient opinion have its improbabilities, the modern ſyſtem is mere ſuppoſition. It is by no means ſufficient to ſay: "it is incredible they ſhould "have tranſported whole quarries from ſuch "a diſtance, and abſurd to multiply expences "to ſo enormous an amount." In whatever

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relates to the opinions, and governments of ancient nations, it is difficult to say what is probable. However improbable therefore the fact in question may seem, if we consider that the historian who relates it drew his materials from the original archives of the ancient Egyptians; that he is remarkably accurate in every thing we are able to verify; that the Lybic rock no where presents elevations similar to those which are supposed, and that the subterranean cavities remain still to be discovered; if we recollect the immense quarries which extend from Saouadi to Manfalout, for the space of five-and-twenty leagues; if we consider, in short, that the stones extracted from them, which are of the same kind, could have been intended for no other visible purpose; we shall at least be induced to suspend our judgment, until the fact is determined by more satisfactory evidence.

Other writers, also, tired of the opinion that the pyramids were tombs, have converted them into temples or observatories. They consider it as absurd to suppose a wise and polished nation would think the sepulchre of its king a matter of so much importance, or that a prince would impoverish his people by forced labours, merely to enclose a skeleton of five feet in a mountain of stones; but I repeat it, we judge of the ancients improperly, when we make our own opinions and customs a standard of comparison. The motives which influenced them, may appear to us extravagant, and possibly may really be so in the eye of reason, without having been less powerful, or less efficacious. Besides, we

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must engage in endless and idle contradictions of all history, to suppose in them a wisdom conformable to our principles: we reason too much from our own ideas, and do not sufficiently attend to theirs. But from whichever we reason in the present dispute, we may affirm that the pyramids never can have been astronomical observatories, because Mount Mokattam would have afforded a still more elevated situation, and which bounds the former; because every elevated observatory is useless in Egypt, where the country is very flat, and where the vapours hide the stars for several degrees above the horizon; because it is impracticable to ascend to the top of the pyramids in general; and because it could not have been necessary to erect *eleven* observatories so near each other as the eleven pyramids of different sizes, which may be seen from Djiza. From these reasons, we shall be led to think that Plato, who first suggested the idea in question, must have had some particular cases only in view, or that in this instance he has only his ordinary merit of an eloquent writer to lay claim to.

But on the other hand, if we weigh the testimonies of the ancients, and local circumstances; if we observe that near the pyramids there are thirty or forty monuments which present rough outlines of the same pyramidal form; that this sterile spot, remote from all cultivable land, possesses the qualities requisite for an Egyptian cemetery, and that near it was that of the whole city of Memphis, *the Plain of Mummies*, we shall no longer doubt that the pyra-

mids

mids are only tombs. We ſhall ceaſe to wonder that the deſpots of a ſuperſtitious people ſhould have made it a point of importance and pride, to build for their ſkeletons impenetrable habitations, when we are informed that, even before the time of Moſes, it was a dogma at Memphis, that ſouls at the expiration of ſix thouſand years, ſhould return to the bodies they had quitted. It was for this reaſon that ſo much pains were taken to preſerve the body from putrefaction, and that endeavours were made to retain even its form, by means of ſpices, bandages, and ſarcophagi. That which is ſtill in the ſepulchral chamber of the great pyramid, is preciſely of its natural dimenſions; and this chamber is ſo obſcure and narrow, only 13 paces long by 11 wide, and nearly of the ſame height, that it never can have contained more than one dead body. Attempts have been made to diſcover ſome myſtery in the ſubterranean cavity which deſcends perpendicularly within the pyramid, forgetting that it was the uniform practice of all antiquity to contrive communications with the inſide of their tombs, in order to perform, on certain days, preſcribed by their religion, the cuſtomary ceremonies; ſuch as libations, and offerings of food to the deceaſed. We muſt recur, therefore, to the ancient opinion, antiquated as it may ſeem, that the pyramids are tombs; and this hypotheſis, favoured by a variety of circumſtances, is ſtill more confirmed by their name, which, according to an analyſis conformable to every

principle of etymology, I think I have discovered to signify *chamber* or *cave* of the *dead*.

The word *pyramid*, is from the Greek Πυραμις, Πυραμιδος; but in the ancient Greek, the υ was pronounced οο; we should therefore say *pooramis*. When the Greeks frequented Egypt after the Trojan war, they could not have a word in their own language the name of these prodigious edifices, which must have been new to them; they must have borrowed it from the Egyptians. *Pooramis* then is not Greek, but Egyptian. Now there is little doubt but the dialects of Egypt, which were various, had a great analogy with those of the neighbouring countries, such as Arabic and Syriac. In these languages it is certain the letter *p* is unknown; but it is no less true, that the Greeks in adopting barbarous words, almost always changed them, and frequently confounded one sound with another, which resembled it. It is certain also, that in the words we know, *p* is continually taken for *b*, which very much resembles it. Now, in the dialect of Palestine, *bour* (בור) signifies every excavation of the earth, a *cistern*, a *prison* properly under ground, a *sepulchre*. (See *Buxtorf, Lexicon Hebr.*) There remains *amis*, in which the final *s* appears to me a termination substituted for *t*, which did not suit the genius of the Greek tongue, and which made the oriental (המת) *a-mit, of the dead, bour a-mit, cave of the dead!* this substitution of *s* for *t* has an example in *atribis*, well known to be *atribit*. The learned may determine whether this etymology is as plausible as many others.

There

There have been other pyramids as well as the great one opened. There is another at *Sakara*, the inside of which appears constructed in the same manner. A few years ago, one of the Beys tried to open the third in size of those that are at Djiza, to obtain the supposed treasure he imagined concealed there. He attempted this on the same side, and at the same height at which the great one has been opened; but after forcing out two or three hundred stones, with considerable labour and expence, he relinquished his avaricious enterprize. The time when the greatest part of the pyramids were built is unknown, but that of the great one is so evident, that it should have never been called in question. Herodotus attributes it to Cheops, with a detail of circumstances which prove his authors were well informed. Cheops, he says, reigned fifty years, twenty of which he employed in building the pyramids. The third part of the inhabitants of Egypt were employed, by forced service, in hewing, transporting, and raising the stones. But Cheops, in his list, which is the best extant, is the second king after Proteus, who was cotemporary with the Trojan war; whence it follows, that this pyramid was erected about one hundred and forty, or one hundred and sixty years after the building of Solomon's temple, and eight hundred and sixty years before Christ. It is worthy of notice, that if we were to write the Egyptian name *Protheus*, as given by the Greeks, in *Phœnician* character, we should make use of the same letters we pronounce *pharao*; the final *o* in the

Hebrew is an *h*, which, at the end of words, frequently becomes *t*.

Deſtructive time, and the ſtill more deſtructive hand of man, which have ſo defaced and deſtroyed all the other monuments of antiquity, have hitherto been able to effect but little againſt the pyramids. The ſolidity of their conſtruction, and their enormous ſize, have ſecured them againſt every attempt, and ſeem to promiſe them an eternal duration. All travellers ſpeak of them with enthuſiaſm, and enthuſiaſm they may well inſpire. Theſe artificial mountains are firſt diſcovered at ten leagues diſtance. They ſeem to retire in proportion as they are approached; and when ſtill a league off, tower with ſuch loftineſs above our heads, that we imagine ourſelves at their feet; but when at length we reach them, nothing can expreſs the various ſenſations they inſpire*. Their ſtupendous

* There is nothing at Paris, ſo proper to give an idea of the pyramids, as the *Hotel des Invalides*, ſeen from the *Cours la Reine*. The length of that building, being ſix hundred feet, is preciſely the ſame as the baſe of the great pyramid; but to conceive their height and ſolidity, we muſt ſuppoſe the front I have mentioned to riſe into a triangle; the perpendicular of which ſhould exceed the height of the dome of that building by two thirds of the dome itſelf, (it is three hundred feet high.) The ſame ſurface muſt be repeated on the four ſides of the ſquare, and the whole maſs contained in them be ſuppoſed ſolid. and offer to view nothing but an immenſe ſlope on every ſide, diſpoſed in ſteps.

The tranſlator of the London edition has the following note:

"The Engliſh reader has only to ſuppoſe the vaſt ſquare "of *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*, the dimenſions of which are the "exact baſe of the great pyramid, wholly filled up from "ſide to ſide, and gradually riſing in a pyramidal form, "to

dous height, the steep declivity of their sides, their prodigious surface, their enormous solidity, the distant ages they recall to memory, the recollection of the labour they must have cost, and the reflection that these huge rocks are the work of man, so diminutive and feeble, who crawls at their feet, lost in wonder, awe, humiliation, and reverence, altogether impress the mind of the spectator in a manner not to be described; but to this first transport other sentiments soon succeed. Elevated as we are with so exalted a proof of the power of man, when we consider the purpose for which these amazing works were intended, we cannot but view them with regret. We lament, that to construct a useless sepulchre, a whole nation should have been rendered miserable for twenty years: we shudder at the numberless acts of injustice and oppression these tiresome labours must have cost, in conveying, preparing, and piling up such an immense mass of stones; and we are inflamed with indignation at the tyranny of the despots who enforced these barbarous works, a sentiment indeed which too frequently recurs on viewing the different monuments of Egypt. Those labyrinths, temples, and pyramids, by their huge and heavy structure, attest much less the genius of a nation, opulent and friendly to the arts, than the servitude of a people who were slaves to the caprices of their monarchs; and we are even inclined to pardon that avarice, which, by violating their tombs,

" to a height exceeding that of St Paul's, by at least one " third." T.

has fruſtrated their idle hopes: we beſtow leſs pity on theſe ruins; and while the lover of the arts beholds with indignation, at Alexandria, the columns of her palaces ſawed into *mill-ſtones*, the philoſopher, after the firſt emotion, occaſioned by the deſtruction of every fine work, cannot ſuppreſs a ſmile at the ſecret juſtice of that deſtiny, which reſtores the people what coſt them ſo much fruitleſs toil, and which renders the pride of uſeleſs luxury ſubſervient to the meaneſt of neceſſities.

We ought to wiſh Egypt under the government of another nation, rather for the happineſs of the people, than the preſervation of the ancient monuments; but were it only in the latter point of view, ſuch a revolution would ſtill be much to be deſired. Were Egypt poſſeſſed by a nation friendly to the fine arts, diſcoveries might be made there, which would make us better acquainted with antiquity than any thing the reſt of the world can afford us. Perhaps even books might be found. It is not above three years ago, that upwards of one hundred volumes, written in an unknown language, were dug up near Damietta as ſome merchants of Acre informed me, but immediately committed to the flames, by command of the Shaiks of Cairo. Indeed the Delta no longer affords any very intereſting ruins, as they have been all deſtroyed by the wants, or the ſuperſtition of the inhabitants. But the Saide, which is leſs inhabited, and the edge of the deſert, ſtill leſs peopled, poſſeſs ſeveral yet untouched. We may hope to find them ſtill

more

more certainly in the Oaſes, thoſe iſlands ſeparated from the world by an ocean of ſand, where no traveller we know of, has ever penetrated ſince the time of Alexander. Theſe countries, in which formerly were cities and temples, having never been ſubject to the devaſtations of the Barbarians, muſt have preſerved their monuments, and the rather as it is probable they are but thinly inhabited, or perhaps entirely deſerted; and theſe monuments, buried in the ſands, muſt be preſerved there, as a depoſite for future generations. To a period leſs remote, poſſibly than we imagine, we muſt defer the gratification of our wiſhes and our hopes. We may then be allowed to ſearch every part of the country, the banks of the Nile, and the ſands of Lybia. We may then be permitted to open the ſmall pyramid of Djiza, the total demolition of which would not coſt fifty thouſand livres (two thouſand pounds.) It is probable too, that till that period, we muſt remain ignorant of the meaning of the hieroglyphics; though, in my opinion, without preciſe means we might have it in our power to explain them.

But to have done with conjectures.—It is now time to proceed to the examination of another country, the ancient and modern ſtate of which are not leſs intereſting even than thoſe of Egypt.

TRAVELS

TRAVELS

IN

EGYPT AND *SYRIA.*

STATE OF SYRIA.

CHAP. XX.

Geographical and Natural Hiſtory of Syria.

QUITTING Egypt by the Iſthmus of Suez, along the coaſt of the Mediterranean, we enter a ſecond province of Turkey, known by the name of Syria. This name, which, with many others, has been brought down to us by the Greeks, is an abridgment of *Aſſyria*, which the Ionians firſt adopted who frequented thoſe coaſts, after the Aſſyrians of Niniveh had made that country a province of their empire; i. e. about 750 years before Chriſt. For this cauſe Homer, who wrote a little before that time, no where uſes this name, though he mentions the inhabitants of the country, but employs the oriental word *aram*, changed into *arimean* and *erembes*. The name of Syria was not therefore of ſo extenſive ſignification as it has ſince obtained, neither Phœnicia nor Paleſtine were included in it. The preſent inhabitants, who, after the uniform

uniform practice of the Arabs, have not adopted the Greek names, are ignorant of the name of *Syria*, although Geographers sometimes write it *Souria*, from the constant change of the Greek upsilon into the Arabic waw. Instead of Syria they called it *Barr-el-sham* which means country of the left; and is the name given to the whole country between two lines the one from Alexandretta to the Euphrates, and the other from Gaza to the desert of Arabia, bounded on the east by that desert, and on the west by the Mediterranean. *El-sham* is also a name of the city of Damascus, the reputed capital of Syria. I am at a loss to discover why M. Savary has made it *el Shams*, or the *City of the Sun*. This name of country of the *left*, from its contrast with that of the *Yamin*, or country of the *right*, indicates an intermediate place, as a common point, which must be Mecca; and from its allusion to the worship of the sun proves at once, a prior origin to Mahomet; and as is already certain, that this worship, was gone about in the temple of the Cauba. Anciently the worshippers of the sun, paid their homage at the moment of his rising; their faces turned towards the east. The north was on the *left*, the south on their *right*, and the west behind them, called in the oriental languages, *acheron*, and *akron*.

Sect. I.

General Aspect of the Country.

On examining a map of Syria, it is observable that Syria is in some degree only a chain of mountains

mountains, which lie in various directions from one leading branch; and such, indeed, is its appearance, whether we approach it from the side of the sea, or by the immense plains of the desert. At a great distance, a clouded ridge appears, running north and south, as far as the eye extends: and, as we advance, the tops of the mountains, sometimes detached, and sometimes united in chains, uniformly terminate in one great line overtopping them all; we may follow this line uninterrupted, from its entry by the north, quite into Arabia. It first runs close to the sea, between Alexandretta and the Orontes, and, after opening a passage to that river, runs on to the southward, quitting, for a short distance, the shore, and, in a chain of continued summits, stretches as far as the sources of Jordan, where it divides into two branches, to enclose, as it were, in a bason, this river and its three lakes. During its course, an infinity of branches separate from this main trunk, some of which are lost in the desert, where they form various enclosed hollows, such as those of Damascus and Hauran, while others advance toward the sea, where they sometimes end in steep declivities, as at Carmel, Nakoura, Cape Blanco, and in almost all the country between Bairout and Tripoli of Syria; but in general they gently terminate in plains, such as those of Antioch, Tripoli, Tyre, and Acre.

SECT.

Sect. II.

Mountains.

As theſe mountains alter their levels and ſituations, they alſo change their form and appearance. Between Alexandretta and the Orontes, the fir, larch, oak, box, laurel, yew, and myrtle trees, with which they abound, produce an air of liveline ſs, which delights the traveller, fatigued with the melancholy nakedneſs of the iſle of Cyprus, at which all veſſels going to Alexandretta touch; the ſouthern part is a naked and deſolate plain. On ſome declivities he even meets with cottages, ſurrounded with fig-trees, and vineyards; and the ſight repays the fatigue of a road, which by rugged paths, leads him from the bottom of valleys to the tops of hills, and *vice verſa*. The leſſer branches, which extend to the northward of Aleppo, on the contrary, preſent nothing but bare rocks, without verdure or earth. Southward of Antioch, and on the ſea-coaſt, the hill-ſides are adapted to the cultivation of tobacco, olives, and vines. Mount Caſius muſt be excepted, which riſes above Antioch to an immenſe height. But Pliny ſurpaſſes hyperbole, when he ſays that, from its top, we may diſcover at once both the morning's dawn and the evening's twilight. But, on the ſide of the deſert, the ſummits and declivities of this chain are almoſt one ſeries of white rocks. Towards Lebanon, the mountains are high, but covered, in many places, with as much earth as fits them for cultivation. There, you ſee, among

among the crags of the rocks, the trifling remains of the boasted cedars, of which only four or five deserve any notice; but a much greater number of firs, oaks, brambles, mulberries, figs, and vines. Leaving the country of the Druses, the mountains are not so lofty, nor so rugged, but become fitter for tillage. They rise again to the south-east of Mount Carmel, are covered with woods, and afford very pleasant prospects; but advancing towards Judea, they lose their verdure, the valleys become narrower, dry and stoney, and terminate at the Dead Sea in a pile of desolate rocks, precipices, and caverns. This is the place called the *Grottoes of Engaddi*, which have been a refuge for vagabonds in all ages. Some of them will contain fifteen hundred men. Westward of Jordan and the lake, another chain of rocks, still loftier, and more rugged, presents a still more gloomy aspect, and announces the distant entrance of the desert, and the termination of the habitable regions.

A prospect of the country will satisfy us that Lebanon is the loftiest point of all Syria, on the south-east of Tripoli. Immediately on leaving Larneca, in Cyprus, which is thirty leagues distant, we discover its summit, capped with clouds. This is also distinctly observeable on the map, from the course of the rivers. The Orontes, flowing from the mountains of Damascus, loses itself below Antioch; the Kasmia, which, north of Balbec, takes its course towards Tyre; the Jordan, forced, by the declivities, toward the south, prove this to be the highest point. Next to Lebanon, the highest part of the

the country is Mount Akkar, which becomes viſible as ſoon as we leave Marra in the deſert. It appears like an immenſe flattened cone, and is conſtantly ſeen for two days journey. The height of theſe mountains has not been aſcertained by the barometer; but we may deduce it from another cauſe. In winter their tops are entirely covered with ſnow, from Alexandretta to Jeruſalem; but after March it melts, except on Mount Lebanon, where, however, it does not continue the whole year, unleſs in the higheſt cavities, and toward the north-eaſt, where it is ſheltered from the ſea winds, and the rays of the ſun. In this ſituation I ſaw it ſtill remaining, in 1784, at the very time I was nearly ſuffocated with heat in the valley of Balbec. Now, ſince it is fully aſcertained that ſnow, in this latitude, requires an elevation of fifteen or ſixteen hundred fathoms, we may conclude that to be the height of Lebanon, and that it is conſequently much lower than the Alps, or even the Pyrenees. Mount Blanc, the loftieſt of the Alps, is eſtimated at two thouſand four hundred fathoms above the level of the ſea; and the peak of Oſſian in the Pyrenees, at nineteen hundred.

Lebanon, from which the whole extenſive chain of the Keſraouan, and the country of the Druzes derives the name, preſents us every where with majeſtic mountains. Every ſtep ſcenes are before us in which nature diſplays either grandeur or beauty, ſometimes uncommon, but always various. On the coaſt, the lofty ſteepneſs of this mountainous ridge, which ſeems

to encloſe the country, thoſe gigantic maſſes which penetrate the clouds, beget aſtoniſhment and awe. Should the curious traveller climb theſe ſummits which terminate his view, the wide extended ſpace which now opens upon him becomes a freſh ſubject of admiration; but completely to enjoy this majeſtic ſcene, he muſt go to the very point of Lebanon, or the *Sannin*. There, on every hand, he will ſee a boundleſs horizon; while, if the weather is clear, the ſight is loſt acroſs the deſert, which extends to the Perſian Gulph, and over the ſea which waſhes the European coaſts. He ſeems to command the whole world; while the wandering eye, ſurveying the ſucceſſive chains of mountains, tranſports the mind in one inſtant from Antioch to Jeruſalem; and now approaching the ſurrounding objects, obſerves the diſtant profundity of the coaſt, till the attention, at length, fixed by diſtinct objects, more minutely examines the rocks, woods, torrents, hill ſides, villages, and towns; and the mind ſecretly exults at the diminution of objects which formerly appeared ſo great. He ſees the valley obſcured by ſtormy clouds, with freſh delight, and ſmiles at hearing the thunder, which had ſo often burſt over his head, growling beneath his feet; while the threatning ſummits of the mountains are only diminiſhed till they appear like the furrows of a ploughed field, or the ſteps of an amphitheatre; and he feels himſelf flattered by an elevation above ſo many lofty objects, on which he now looks down with inward ſatisfaction and pride.

On viſiting the interior parts of theſe moun-

tains,

tains, the roughneſs of the roads, the ſteep deſcents, and precipices, ſtrike him at firſt with terror; but the ſagacity of his mule ſoon relieves him, and he calmly ſurveys thoſe picturesque ſcenes which ſucceed each other to entertain him. There, as in the Alps, he travels whole days together, to reach a place which was in ſight at his departure; he winds, deſcends, ſkirts the hills, and climbs; and in this perpetual change it ſeems as if magic herſelf varied for him at every ſtep the decorations of the ſcenery. Sometimes he ſees villages gliding from the ſteep declivities on which they are built, and ſo arranged that the terraces of one row of houſes ſerve as a ſtreet to thoſe above them. Sometimes he ſees a convent ſtanding on a ſolitary height, like Mar-Shaya, in the valley of the Tigris. Here a rock perforated by a torrent, and become a natural arch, like that of Nahr-el-Leben*. There another rock, worn perpendicular, reſembles a high wall. Frequently on the ſides of hills he ſees beds of ſtones ſtripped and detached by the waters, riſing up like artificial ruins. In many places, the waters, meeting with inclined beds, have excavated the intermediate earth, and formed caverns, as at Nahr-el-kelb, near Antoura: in others ſubterraneous channels are formed, through which flow rivulets for a part of the year, as at Mar-Elias-el-Roum, and Mar-Hanna. Theſe ſubterraneous rivulets are common

* The river of milk, which falls into Nahr-el-Salib called alſo the river of Bairout; this arch is upwards of one hundred and ſixty feet long, eighty-five wide, and near two hundred high above the torrent.

throughout Syria; there are ſome near Damaſcus, at the ſources of the Orontes, and at thoſe of Jordan. That of Mar-Hanna, a Greek convent, near the village of Shouair, opens by a gulph called *El-baloua*, or the Swallower. It is an aperture of about ten feet wide, ſituated in the middle of a hollow: at the depth of fifteen feet is a ſort of firſt bottom; but it only hides a very profound lateral opening. Some years ago it was ſhut, as it had ſerved to conceal a murder. The winter rains coming on, the waters collected, and formed a pretty deep lake; but ſome ſmall ſtreams penetrating among the ſtones, they were ſoon ſtripped of the earth which faſtened them, and the preſſure of the maſs of water prevailing, the whole obſtacle was removed with an exploſion like thunder; and the re-action of the compreſſed air was ſo violent, that a column of water ſpouted up, and fell upon a houſe at the diſtance of at leaſt two hundred paces. The current this occaſioned formed a whirlpool, which ſwallowed up the trees and vines planted in the hollow, and threw them out by the ſecond aperture.

Theſe picturesque ſituations often become tragical. By thaws and earthquakes rocks have been known to loſe their equilibrium, roll down on the neighbouring houſes, and bury the inhabitants: This happened about twenty years ago, and overwhelmed a whole village near Mardjordjos, without leaving a ſingle trace where it formerly ſtood. Still more lately, and near the ſame place, a whole hill ſide, covered with mulberries and vines, was detached by a ſud-

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den thaw, and sliding down the rock, was launched, like a ship from the stocks, into the valley. Hence a whimsical, but reasonable dispute took place, between the former and present possessor of the emigrated land; the cause was carried before Emir Yousef, who indemnified both for their mutual losses. It might be supposed that such accidents would disgust the inhabitants of those mountains; but besides that they happen seldom, they are compensated by an advantage which makes them prefer their habitations to the most fertilized plains, I mean the security they enjoy from the oppressions of the Turks. This security is esteemed such a blessing by the inhabitants, that they have discovered an industry on these rocks which we may elsewhere expect in vain. By mere art and labour they have fertilized a rocky soil. Sometimes to gain the water, they conduct it by a thousand windings along the declivities; or stop it by dams in the valleys; while in other places, they prop up ground, ready to crumble down, by walls and terraces. Almost all these mountains, thus laboured, have the appearance of a flight of stairs, or an amphitheatre, every step of which is a row of vines or mulberry-trees. I have computed from 100 to 120 of these gradations on the same declivity. While among these mountains, I forgot it was in Turkey; or, if I recollected it, it was only to feel more sensibly the powerful effect of even the slightest liberty.

Sect. III.

Structure of the Mountains.

Upon examining these mountains, we find they consist of a hard calcareous whitish stone, sonorous like free-stone, and disposed in strata variously inclined. This stone has nearly the same appearance in every part of Syria; sometimes it is bare, and looks like the peeled rocks on the coast of Provence: such, for instance, is that of the chain of hills on the north side of the road from Antioch to Aleppo, and that which serves as a bed to the upper part of the rivulet which passes by the latter city. Near Ermenaz, a village situated between Serkin and Kastin, is a defile where the rocks exactly resemble those we pass between Marseilles and Toulon. In travelling from Aleppo to Hama, veins of the same rock are constantly to be met with in the plain, while the mountains on the right present huge piles, which appear like the ruins of towns and castles. The same stone, under a more regular form, likewise composes the greater part of Lebanon, Anti-Lebanon, the mountains of the Druzes, Galilee, and Mount Carmel, and stretches to the south of the Lake Asphaltites. The inhabitants every where build their houses, and make lime with it. I have never read, nor heard, that these stones contained any petrified shells in the upper regions of Lebanon; but we find, between Batround and Djebail, in the Kesraouan, not far from the sea, a quarry of schistous stones, the flakes of which bear

bear the impreſſions of plants, fiſh, ſhells, and particularly the ſea onion. The bed of the torrent of Azkalan, in Paleſtine, is alſo lined with a heavy ſtone, porous and ſalt, which contains many ſmall volutes and bivalves of the Mediterranean. Pocock found a large quantity of them in the rocks which border on the Dead Sea. Iron is the only mineral which abounds here; the mountains of Keſraouan, and of the Druzes, are full of it. Every ſummer the inhabitants work thoſe mines, which are ſimply ochreous. Judea cannot be without it, ſince Moſes obſerved, above three thouſand years ago, that its ſtones were of iron. Report ſays, that there was anciently a copper mine near Aleppo, but it muſt have been abandoned long ſince: I have been informed alſo among the Druzes, that in the declivity of the hill I have mentioned, a mineral was diſcovered which produced both lead and ſilver; but as ſuch a diſcovery would have proved the ruin of the whole diſtrict, by attracting the attention of the Turks, they quickly deſtroyed every veſtige of it.

SECT. IV.

Volcanoes and Earthquakes.

THE ſouthern part of Syria, that is, the low country through which Jordan flows, abounds with volcanoes; the bituminous and ſulphureous ſources of the Lake Aſphaltites, the lava and pumice-ſtones thrown on its banks, and the hot bath of Tabaria, clearly evince that this valley has been the ſeat of a ſubterraneous fire which

is not yet extinguiſhed. Clouds of ſmoke are often ſeen iſſuing from the lake, and new crevices formed upon its banks. Were conjectures in ſuch caſes not too liable to error, we might ſuſpect that the whole valley has been formed only by a violent ſinking of a country which in ſome former period poured the Jordan into the Mediterranean. It ſeems certain, at leaſt, that the cataſtrophe of five cities, deſtroyed by fire, muſt have been occaſioned by the eruption of a volcano, then burning. Strabo (lib. 16. p. 764.) expreſsly ſays, "that the tradition of the inhabitants of the country, (that is, of the Jews themſelves), was, that formerly the valley of the lake was peopled by thirteen flouriſhing cities, and that they were ſwallowed up by a volcano." This account appears to be confirmed by the quantities of ruins ſtill found by travellers on the weſtern border. Theſe eruptions have ceaſed long ſince, but earthquakes, which uſually ſucceed them, ſtill continue to be felt at intervals in this country. The coaſt in general is ſubject to them, and hiſtory affords many inſtances of earthquakes overturning cities, ſuch as Antioch, Laodicea, Tripoli, Berytus, Tyre, Sidon, &c. In our time, in the year 1759, there happened one which cauſed the greateſt ravages. It is ſaid to have deſtroyed, in the valley of Balbec, upwards of twenty thouſand perſons, a loſs which has never been repaired. For three months, the ſhocks of it filled the inhabitants of Lebanon with ſuch terror as to make them abandon their houſes, and dwell under tents. Very lately (14th December, 1783,) when

when I was at Aleppo, ſo violent a ſhock was felt, as to ring the bell in the French conſul's houſe. It is remarked in Syria, that earthquakes ſeldom happen but in winter, after the autumnal rains; and this remark, conformable to that made by Doctor Shaw in Barbary, ſeems to prove that the action of water on the dried earth has ſome ſhare in theſe convulſive motions. It may be proper to obſerve, all Aſia Minor is ſubject to earthquakes.

Sect. V.

Locuſts.

Syria, like Egypt, Perſia, and the greater part of the ſouth of Aſia, is ſubject to another calamity equally dreadful, I mean thoſe clouds of locuſts, ſo often noticed by travellers. The quantity of theſe inſects is incredible to all who have not been witneſſes of their aſtoniſhing numbers; the whole earth is covered with them for the ſpace of ſeveral leagues. The noiſe they make in browzing on the trees and herbage, may be heard at a great diſtance, and reſembles that of an army foraging in ſecret. The Tartars themſelves are not ſo deſtructive an enemy as theſe little animals; one would imagine, that fire had followed their progreſs. Wherever their myriads ſpread, the verdure of the country diſappears, as if a covering were removed; trees and plants, ſtripped of their leaves, and reduced to their naked boughs and ſtems, cauſe the dreary image of winter to ſucceed in an inſtant,

ſtant, to the rich ſcenery of the ſpring. When theſe clouds of locuſts take their flight, to ſurmount any obſtacle, or to traverſe more rapidly a deſert ſoil, the heavens may literally be ſaid to be obſcured by them. Happily this calamity happens but ſeldom, for it is the inevitable forerunner of famine, and the maladies occaſioned thereby. The inhabitants of Syria have obſerved, that locuſts are always bred by too mild winters, and that they conſtantly come from the deſert of Arabia. From this obſervation, it naturally occurs that, the cold not having been ſevere enough to deſtroy their eggs, they multiply ſuddenly, and, the herbage failing them in the immenſe plains of the deſert, innumerable legions iſſue forth. When they firſt appear on the frontiers of the cultivated country, the inhabitants ſtrive to drive them off, by raiſing large clouds of ſmoke, but frequently their herbs and wet ſtraw fail them; they then dig trenches, where numbers of them are buried; but the two moſt powerful deſtroyers of theſe inſects, are the ſouth or ſouth-eaſterly winds, and the bird called the *ſamarmar*. Theſe birds, which greatly reſemble the woodpecker, follow them in large flocks, and not only greedily devour them, but kill as many as they can; they are therefore much reſpected by the peaſants, and nobody is ever ſuffered to ſhoot them. As for the ſoutherly winds, they drive with violence theſe clouds of locuſts over the Mediterranean, where ſuch quantities of them are drowned that, when their carcaſes are

caſt

caſt on the ſhore, they infect the air for ſeveral days, to a conſiderable diſtance.

SECT. VI.

Qualities of the Soil.

IT may be reaſonably preſumed, that in ſo extenſive a country as Syria, the quality of the ſoil is not every where the ſame. In general the land of the mountains is harſh and ſtoney; while that of the plains is rich and loamy, and exhibits every ſign of the greateſt fecundity. In the territory of Aleppo, towards Antioch, it reſembles very fine brick-duſt, or Spaniſh ſnuff. The waters of the Orontes, however, which runs through this diſtrict, are of a whitiſh colour, which is occaſioned by the nature of the lands towards its ſource. Almoſt every where elſe the earth is brown, and as fine as garden mold. In the plains, ſuch as thoſe of Hauran, Gaza, and Balbec, it is often difficult even to find a pebble. The rains in winter occaſion deep quagmires; but in ſummer, when the heat returns, it produces, as in Egypt, wide fiſſures in the earth of the depth of ſeveral feet.

SECT. VII.

Rivers and Lakes.

THE immoderate, or, if you pleaſe, the grand ideas which hiſtory and travellers generally give us of diſtant objects, have accuſtomed us to ſpeak of the waters of Syria with a reſpect which diverts our imagination. We are fond of ſaying

ing the *river Jordan*, the *river Orontes*, the *river Adonis*. If, however, we wiſh to preſerve to words their proper meaning, we ſhall ſcarcely find in this country any other than *rivulets*. The channels of the Orontes and the Jordan, the two moſt conſiderable, are hardly ſixty paces wide at their mouths; (the Jordan, it muſt be confeſſed, has conſiderable depth, but if the Orontes were not impeded by ſucceſſive obſtacles, it would be quite dry during the ſummer;) the others are not worth mentioning. If the rains and melted ſnow give them ſome importance in winter, their courſe can only be known during the remainder of the year, by the round ſtones and fragments of rocks with which their beds are filled. They are merely torrents and caſcades; and it may be imagined that, from the proximity of the mountains, among which they riſe, to the ſea, their waters have not time to collect in long valleys, ſo as to form rivers. The obſtacles oppoſed by theſe mountains, in ſeveral places, at their iſſue, have formed conſiderable lakes, ſuch as thoſe of Antioch, Aleppo, Damaſcus, Houla, Tabaria, and that which is diſtinguiſhed by the name of the Dead Sea, or Lake Aſphaltites. Theſe lakes, except the laſt, are all of freſh water, and contain ſeveral ſpecies of fiſh, unknown to us. The lake of Antioch; particularly abounds with eels, and a ſort of red fiſh of an indifferent quality. The Greeks, who keep a continual Lent, conſume great quantities of them. Lake Tabaria is ſtill richer; crabs eſpecially, are very

very numerous, but, as its environs are inhabited only by Mahometans, it is but little fished.

In lake Asphaltites, alone, there is neither animal nor vegetable life. No verdure is to be seen on its banks, nor fish to be found within its waters; but it is not true that its exhalations are pestiferous, so as to destroy birds flying over it. It is not uncommon to see swallows skimming its surface, and dipping for the water necessary to build their nests. The true cause which deprives it of vegetables and animals is the extreme saltness of the water, which is vastly stronger than that of the sea. The soil around it, equally impregnated with this salt, produces no plants, and the air itself, which becomes loaded with it from evaporation and which receives also the sulphureous and bituminous vapours, cannot be favourable to vegetation: hence the deadly aspect which reigns around this lake. The ground about it, however, is not marshy, and its waters are limpid and incorruptible, as must be the case with a dissolution of salt. The origin of this mineral is easy to be discovered; for on the south-west shore, are mines of fossile salt, of which I have brought away several specimens. They are situated in the side of the mountains which extend along that border, and, for time immemorial, have supplied the Arabs in the neighbourhood, and even the city of Jerusalem. We find also on this shore fragments of sulphur and bitumen, which the Arabs convert into a trifling article of commerce; as also hot fountains, and deep crevices, which are discovered at a

diſtance, by little pyramids built on the brink of them. We likewiſe find a ſort of ſtone, which, on rubbing, emits a noxious ſmell, burns like bitumen, receives a poliſh like white alabaſter, and is uſed for paving court yards. At intervals, we alſo meet with unſhapen blocks, which prejudiced eyes miſtake for mutilated ſtatues, and which paſs with ignorant and ſuperſtitious pilgrims, for monuments of the circumſtance of *Lot's Wife*, though it is no where ſaid ſhe was metamorphoſed into ſtone, like Niobe, but into ſalt, which muſt have diſſolved the ſucceeding winter.

It has puzzled ſome naturaliſts to find a diſcharge for the waters which the Jordan is continually pouring into the lake, and have therefore been inclined to ſuſpect it had ſome communication with the Mediterranean; but, beſides that we know of no ſuch gulph, it has been demonſtrated, by accurate calculations, that evaporation is more than ſufficient to carry off the waters of the river. It is, in fact, very conſiderable, and frequently becomes ſenſible to the eye, by the fogs with which the lake is covered, at the riſing of the ſun, and which are afterwards diſperſed by the heat.

SECT. VIII.

Climate.

IT is a very general opinion that the climate of Syria is very hot; but it will be neceſſary to attend to ſome diſtinctions: firſt, from the difference of latitude, which from one extremi-

ty

ty to the other, is not less than six degrees: secondly, the natural division of the country into flat, and mountainous, which division produces a still more sensible difference; for while Reaumur's thermometer stands at twenty-five and twenty-six degrees upon the coast, it hardly amounts to twenty or twenty-one among the mountains. Along the coast of Syria, and at Tripoli, in particular, the lowest degrees to which the thermometer falls in winter, are eight and nine degrees above the freezing point; (50 and 52 of *Fahrenheit's*) in summer, in close apartments, it rises from 25½ to 60° (88 to 90). As for the barometer, it is remarkable that at the latter end of May, it fixes at 28 inches, and never varies till October. In winter, therefore, all the chain of mountains is covered with snow, while the lower country is always free from it, or at least it lies a very short time. We must first therefore establish two general climates; the one very hot, which is that of the coast, and the interior plains, such as Balbec, Antioch, Tripoli, Acre, Gaza, Hauran, &c. the other temperate, and very similar to our own, which is the climate of the mountains, at least at a certain height. The summer of 1784 was reckoned by the Druzes, one of the hottest they remembered, yet I never found the heat comparable to that I had felt at Saide or Bairout.

The seasons in this climate, are almost in the order of the middle provinces of France; the winter, which continues from November to March, is sharp and rigorous. Not a year passes without snow, and the earth is often co-

vered several feet for months together; the spring and autumn are mild, and the summer heat is absolutely insupportable. In the plains, on the contrary, as soon as the sun returns to the equator, the transition is rapid to oppressive heats, which continue to the end of October. But then the winter is so mild, that the orange, date, banana, and other delicate trees, flourish in the open air; and it appears no less extraordinary and picturesque to an European at Tripoli, to see, in the month of January, under his windows, orange trees in full flower and fruit, while the lofty summit of Lebanon is covered with ice and snow. It must however be observed that, in the northern parts, and to the east of the mountains, the winter is more severe, and the summer not less hot. At Antioch, Aleppo, and Damascus, there are several weeks of frost and snow every winter: which is more owing to the situation of the country than the difference of latitude. For all the plain east of the mountains is very high, exposed to all the parching blasts of the north and north-east, and screened from the humid south and south-west winds. Besides, Antioch and Aleppo receive from the mountains of Alexandretta, which are in view, an air which the snow, that covers them so long, must necessarily render very keen.

In Syria, different climates are thus united under the same sky, and, in a narrow compass, pleasures and productions which nature has elsewhere dispersed at great distances are collected. With us, for instance, seasons are divided

vided by months, there, by hours. If in Saide or Tripoli, we feel the heats of July troublesome, in six hours we are in the neighbouring mountains, in the temperature of March; or, again, if chilled by the frosts of December, at Besharrai, a day's journey brings us back to the coast, amid the flowers of May*. The Arabian poets have therefore said, that "the Sannin bears winter on his head, spring upon his "shoulders, and autumn in his bosom, while "summer lies sleeping at his feet." I have myself experienced this figurative observation, during the eight months I resided at the monastery of Mar-Hanna†, seven leagues from Bairout. At the end of February, at Tripoli, a variety of vegetables were in perfection, and many flowers in full bloom. On my arrival at Antoura‡, I found the plants only beginning to shoot; and, at Mar-Hanna, every thing was covered with snow. It had not wholly left the Sannin till the end of April, and, already, in the valley it overlooks, roses had begun to bud. The early figs were past at Bairout, when they were first gathered with us, and the silk-worms were in cod, before our mulberry-trees were half stripped.

* This is the practice of several of the inhabitants of this district, who pass the winter near Tripoli, while their houses are buried under the snow.

† Mar-Hanna el Shouair; i. e. St John, near the village of Shouair. This monastery is situated in a stoney valley which joins to that of *Nahr el Kelb*, or Torrent of the Dog. The religious are Greek Catholics, of the order of Saint Basil: I shall have occasion to speak of it more amply.

‡ A house formerly belonging to the Jesuits, but occupied at present by the Lazarists.

By this means, enjoyments are perpetuated by their ſucceſſion, Syria adds another, that of multiplying them by variety. Were nature aided by art, thoſe of the moſt diſtant countries might be produced within twenty leagues. At preſent, notwithſtanding the barbariſm of a government which is inimical to all induſtry and improvement, we are aſtoniſhed at the variety. Beſides wheat, rye, barley, beans, and the cotton plant, which is every where cultivated, we find many uſeful and agreeable productions, appropriated to different ſituations. In Paleſtine ſeſamum abounds, from which they procure oil and doura* as good as that of Egypt†. Maize thrives in the light ſoil of Balbec, and even rice is cultivated, with ſucceſs, on the borders of the marſhy country of Havula. They have lately begun to cultivate ſugar-canes in the gardens of Saide and of Bairout, equal to thoſe of the Delta. Indigo grows without cultivation, on the banks of the Jordan, in the Biſan country and only needs care to make it of an excellent quality. The hill-ſides of Latakia produce tobacco, which is the chief article of the commerce of that town with Damietta and Cairo. This is now cultivated throughout all the mountains. As for trees, the olive-tree of Provence grows at Antioch, at Ramla, to the height of the beech. In the white mulberry tree conſiſts

* A ſort of pulſe, ſomething like lentils, which grows in cluſters, on a ſtalk ſix or ſeven feet high. It is the *holcus arundinaceus* of Linnæus.

† I never ſaw any buck-wheat in Syria, and oats are very rare. They feed their horſes with nothing but rye and chaff.

conſiſts the wealth of the whole country of the Druzes, by the beautiful ſilks which it produces, while the vine, ſupported by poles, or winding about the oaks, ſupplies grapes which afford red and white wines equal to thoſe of Bourdeaux. Before the late troubles, there were, in the gardens of Yaffa, two plants of the Indian cotton-tree, which grew rapidly, nor has this town loſt its lemons, its enormous citrons, ſome weighing 18 pounds, or its water-melons, which are preferable even to thoſe of Broulos, where very fine water-melons grow. Gaza produces dates like Mecca, and pomegranates like Algiers; Tripoli affords oranges like Malta; Bairout figs like Marſeilles, and bananas like St Domingo; Aleppo has the excluſive advantage of producing piſtachios; and Damaſcus juſtly boaſts of poſſeſſing all the fruits known in our provinces. Its ſtoney ſoil ſuits equally the apples of Normandy, the plumbs of Touraine, and the peaches of Paris. Twenty ſorts of apricots are enumerated there, the ſtone of one of which contains a kernel highly valued through all Turkey. In ſhort, the cochineal plant, which grows on all that coaſt, contains, perhaps, that precious inſect in as high perfection as it is found in Mexico and St Domingo*; and if we conſider that

* It was long ſuppoſed that the inſect of the cochineal was peculiar to Mexico; and the Spaniards, to ſecure the ſole poſſeſſion of it, have prohibited the exportation of the living cochineal, under pain of death; but M. Thierri, who ſucceeded in bringing it away, in 1771, and carried it to Saint Domingo, found the nopals of that iſland contained it before his arrival. It ſeems as if nature hardly ever ſeparated inſects from the plants appropriated to them.

that the mountains of the Yemen, which produce ſuch excellent coffee, are only a continuation of thoſe of Syria, and that their ſoil and climate are almoſt the ſame*, we ſhall be induced to believe that Judea particularly, might eaſily cultivate this valuable production of Arabia.

With theſe numerous advantages of climate and of ſoil, it is not ſurpriſing that Syria ſhould always have been reckoned a moſt delicious country, and that the Greeks and Romans eſteemed it among the moſt beautiful of the provinces, and not inferior to Egypt. In more modern times, alſo, a Pacha, who knew both theſe provinces, being aſked which he preferred, replied, "Egypt is doubtleſs a moſt beautiful "farm, but Syria is a delightful country-villa."

We may ſum up the Natural Hiſtory of Syria, by adding, that it produces all our domeſtic animals, beſides the buffalo and the camel, ſo well known. We alſo find gazelles (antelopes) in the plains, which ſupply the place of our roe-bucks; in the mountains wild-boars, though not ſo large or fierce as ours. The ſtag and the deer are unknown; the wolf and fox are very rare; but there is a prodigious number of the middle ſpecies, named *Shacal* (jackall) which they call *wauwee*, in imitation of its howl; and in Egypt *dib*, or wolf. Theſe jackalls go in droves, and infeſt the neighbourhood of towns, where they feed on what carrion they can find. They

* The ſituation of the country of Yemen and Tahama greatly reſembles that of Syria. See M. Niebuhr *Voyage à Arabie.*

They never attack a body, but are always ready to fly. In the evening they seem to give each other the watch-word, to howl; their cries, which are very doleful, sometimes last a quarter of an hour. In unfrequented places there are also hyenas, in Arabic named *daba*, and ounces, improperly called tygers (in Arabic *nema*). Lebanon, the Druzes, Nablous, Mount Carmel, and the environs of Alexandretta, are their chief haunts. But, on the other hand, the country is free from lions and bears. Water fowl are in plenty; land game not so abundant, but in particular districts. The hare and large red partridge are most common; rabbits, if any, are extremely scarce. The francolin, or attagen, is more numerous at Tripoli, and in the neighbourhood of Yafa. Nor ought we to omit remarking, that a species of the colibri (or humming-bird) still exists in Saide. M. J. B. Adanson, formerly interpreter in that city, who cultivates natural history with taste and success, met with one, which he made a present of to his brother the Academician. This, and the pelican are the chiefly remarkable birds in Syria.

Sect. IX.

The Air.

I must not omit to mention the qualities of the air and waters. These in Syria afford very remarkable phænomena. On the mountains, and all the high ground which stretches to the eastward, the air is light, pure and dry; while on the coast, and especially from Alexandretta to Yafa, it

it is moiſt and heavy; thus Syria is divided lengthways into two different diſtricts, by the chain of mountains which alſo occaſion this diverſity; for theſe prevent, by their height, the free paſſage of the weſterly winds, force the vapours which they bring from the ſea to collect in the valleys; and as air is light in proportion to its purity, they cannot riſe above the ſummits of this rampart. Conſequently the air of the deſert and the mountains, though ſufficiently wholeſome otherwiſe, is very prejudicial to pulmonary complaints; and it is neceſſary to ſend ſuch from Aleppo to Latakia or Saide. This good quality of the air on the coaſt is, however, overbalanced by more ſerious bad ones, and it may in general be pronounced unhealthy, as it occaſions intermittent and putrid fevers, and thoſe defluxions of the eyes, which I have mentioned in treating of Egypt. The night dews, and ſleeping on terraces, are found much leſs prejudicial in the mountains and interior parts of the country, as the diſtance from the ſea is more, which eſtabliſhes what I have already ſaid upon that head.

SECT. X.

The Waters.

THE waters of Syria are alſo remarkably different. In the mountains, the ſprings are light, and of a very good quality; but in the plain, both eaſt and weſt, if there is no natural or artificial communication with the ſprings, we find nothing

nothing but brackiſh water, which becomes ſtill more ſo the nearer we approach the deſert, where there is not a drop of any other. This inconvenience has rendered rain ſo precious to the inhabitants of the frontiers, that they have in all ages taken care to collect it in wells and caverns carefully cloſed: hence, among all ruins, ciſterns are the firſt things diſcovered.

The face of the ſky, in Syria, eſpecially on the coaſt, and in the deſert, is in general more regular than in our climates; the ſun is rarely obſcured for two ſucceſſive days. In the courſe of a whole ſummer we ſee few clouds, and ſtill leſs rain; which only begins about the end of October, and then neither long nor plentiful. The huſbandmen deſire it to ſow what they call their *winter* crop, that is, their wheat and barley.* In December and January, the rain is more frequent and heavy; and ſnow falls frequently in the higher country. It ſometimes alſo rains in March and April; and the huſbandman now ſows his *ſummer* crop of ſeſamum, dourra,

* The ſeed-time of the winter crop, called *Shetawia*, commences, throughout Syria, only at the time of the autumnal rains, or about the end of October. The time of reaping this crop varies according to the difference of ſituation. In Paleſtine, and the Hauran, they reap their wheat and barley from the end of April to the end of May. But as we advance toward the north, or aſcend the mountains, the harveſt does not begin till June and July.

The ſeed-time of the ſummer crop, or *Saiſia*, begins with the ſpring rains, that is, in March and April; and their reaping-time is in September and October.

The time of vintage, in the mountains, is toward the end of September; the ſilk-worms hatch there in April and May, and begin to ſpin in July.

doura, tobacco, cotton, beans, and water-melons. The reſt of the year is uniform, and drought is more generally complained of than too much rain.

Sect. XI.

Winds.

In Syria, as in Egypt, the winds are in ſome degree periodical, and regulated by the ſeaſons. At the autumnal equinox the north-weſt wind blows more frequent and ſtronger. It renders the air dry, ſharp, and clear; and it is remarkable that, on the coaſt, it occaſions a head-ach, like the north-eaſt wind in Egypt; and this oftener in the northern than the ſouthern parts, but never in the mountains. We may further obſerve, that it generally blows three days ſucceſſively, like the ſouth and ſouth-eaſt at the other equinox. It prevails till November, that is, about fifty days, and the changes are generally toward the eaſt. Theſe winds are followed by the north-weſt, weſt, and ſouth-weſt, which prevail from November to February. The two latter are, to uſe the Arabian expreſſion, *the fathers of the rains*. In March the pernicious winds blow from the ſouthern quarter, with the ſame circumſtances as in Egypt; but they are feebler toward the north, and are much more tolerable in the mountains than the flat country. Their duration, at each return, is generally two or three days. The eaſterly winds, which follow, continue till June, when a north wind ſucceeds, with which veſſels ſafely coaſt the

the country. At the same season also, the wind varies through all the points, every day, passing with the sun from the east to the south, and from the south to the west, to return by the north, and recommence the same circuit. At this time also a local wind, called the land-breeze, prevails at night along the coast; it springs up after sun-set, lasts till sun-rising, and reaches only a few leagues out at sea.

The causes of these phænomena are problems meriting the attention of natural philosophers. No country is more adapted to observations of this kind than Syria. It would seem as if nature had there prepared whatever is necessary to the study of her operations. We, in our foggy climates, in the depth of vast continents, are unable to pursue the great changes which happen in the atmosphere: the confined horizon bounding our view, also circumscribes our ideas. The field of observation is very limited; and a thousand circumstances unite to vary the effects of natural causes. There, an immense scene opens, and the great agents of nature are collected in a space which renders it easy to watch their various operations. To the west, the vast liquid plain of the Mediterranean; to the east, the plain of the desert, no less extensive, but absolutely dry; between these two level surfaces, rise the mountains, whose tops are so many observatories, from whence the sight may discern full thirty leagues. Four observers might command all Syria; and from the tops of Casius, Lebanon, and Tabor, let nothing escape them within that boundless horizon. They might

obſerve how the region of the ſea, at firſt unclouded, veils itſelf with vapours; in what manner theſe form into groupes, and ſeparate, and by a conſtant mechaniſm, aſcend and riſe above the mountains; while, on the other hand, the deſert, invariably clear, never produces clouds, and has only thoſe it has received from the ſea. They might reply to the queſtion propoſed by M. Michaelis, "Whether the deſert produces "dews?" that the deſert without any water, but in winter, after the rains, can only furniſh vapours at that period. On reviewing the valley of Balbec, ſcorched with heat, while the top of Lebanon is hoary with ice and ſnow, they would be ſenſible of the truth of an axiom, which ought no longer to be queſtioned, *that the heat increaſes in proportion as we approach the ſurface of the earth, and leſſens as we remove from it*; ſo that it ſeems to ariſe only from the action of the rays of the ſun upon the earth. In a word, they might ſolve the principal meteorogical problems, which have for ages occupied the attention of philoſophers.

CHAP. XXI.

Remarks on the Winds, Clouds, Rains, Fogs, and Thunder.

AS this has not been attempted by perſons capable of making ſuch experiments, with all the accuracy

accuracy so important a discussion merits, I shall submit, in a few words, some general ideas suggested by my own observations. I have already mentioned the connection there is between the winds and seasons; and have hinted that the sun, from the relation between his annual progress, and their varieties, appears to be the principal agent. His action on the atmosphere surrounding our globe, seems to be the primary cause of the various motions in the upper regions of the air. To conceive clearly how this is effected, we must trace back these ideas to their origin, and consider the properties of the element put in action.

First, then, we know that the air is a fluid, all the particles of which, naturally equal and moveable, like water, invariably tend to a level; so that if we imagine a chamber six feet square, the air introduced into it will equally fill it. Secondly, air is capable of dilatation or compression; that is, the same quantity may occupy a greater or a less space. Thus, in the case of the chamber, were we to draw off two thirds of the air it contains, the remainder would replace it by expansion, and still continue to occupy its whole capacity; if instead of drawing off the air, the quantity of it is doubled or tripled, the chamber will equally contain it; the case with water is different.

This expansion is more especially called into action by fire; and as then the heated air contains in the same space, fewer particles than cold air, it becomes lighter, and rises. If, for example, in the chamber, you introduce a grate

full of fire, the air affected by it will riſe inſtantly to the ceiling, and that which was near it will take its place. When this air is heated it will follow the firſt, and a conſtant current upwards, ſupplied by the influx of the lateral air, be produced, as is the caſe in chimneys and ſtove baths; ſo that the hotteſt air will diffuſe itſelf in the upper part of the room, and the leſs heated in the lower, each of them continuing to ſeek an equilibrium, agreeable to the general laws of fluidity*.

Applying theſe obſervations to what paſſes in the elements, on a larger ſcale, we find they explain the greater part of the phenomena of the winds.

The atmoſphere ſurrounding the earth may be conſidered as an ocean formed by a peculiar fluid, the bottom of which we occupy, and the ſurface is at an unknown height. From this primary law, that is, from its fluidity, this ocean has a conſtant tendency to an equilibrium, and to remain ſtagnant; but the ſun, calling into action the law of expanſion, excites an agitation in it which keeps all its parts in a ſtate of perpetual fluctuation. His rays, applied to the ſurface of the earth, have preciſely the ſame effect as the fire in the ſuppoſed chamber; they produce a degree of heat which dilates the contiguous air, and cauſes it to riſe towards the upper region. Were this heat equal throughout, the general proceſs would be uniform; but it varies

* There is beſides this a continual effort of the rarefied air againſt the obſtacles by which it is confined; but this is of no conſequence in the preſent caſe.

varies from an infinite number of circumſtances, which occaſion the varieties we always notice.

In the firſt place, it is certain that the earth is more or leſs heated as it is more or leſs expoſed to the perpendicular rays of the ſun. The heat is trifling at the poles, but exceſſive under the line. On this account our climates are colder in winter and hotter in ſummer; and, likewiſe, the temperature may be very different in the ſame place, and under the ſame latitude, according as the country, inclining towards the north or ſouth, preſents its ſurface more or leſs obliquely to the rays of the ſun. For this reaſon, as Monteſquieu has well obſerved, Tartary, which is under the ſame parallel as France and England, is infinitely colder than theſe countries.

Again, it is no leſs true that the ſurface of the water is leſs retentive of heat than the earth: the air over the ſea, lakes, and rivers, therefore, will not be ſo hot as that over the land in the ſame latitude; humidity is every where a principle of coolneſs, and hence a country covered with foreſts, and abounding in moraſſes, is colder than when thoſe marſhy grounds are drained, and the foreſts cleared; for this reaſon ancient Gaul was much colder than modern France.

Still farther, the heat diminiſhes as we riſe above the general plane of the earth. This is evident from obſerving, that the ſummits of high mountains, even under the line, are covered with eternal ſnows, which proves the conſtant coldneſs of the upper region of the air.

Conſidering, therefore, the combined effects of theſe different circumſtances, we ſhall find

they account for the greateſt part of the phenomena we are attempting to ſolve.

Firſt, the air of the polar regions being colder and more denſe than that of the countries near the equinoctial, its endeavour to preſerve an equilibrium, conſtantly forces it from the poles towards the equator. And this reaſoning is ſupported by facts, ſince the uniform obſervation of all navigators proves that the winds moſt common in both hemiſpheres proceed from that quarter of the horizon of which the pole occupies the center; that is to ſay, from between the north-weſt and north-eaſt. What is the caſe in the Mediterranean, particularly, perfectly correſponds with this obſervation.

In ſpeaking of Egypt, I have already ſaid, that the northerly winds are moſt common in that ſea, where they prevail nine months out of twelve. A very plauſible ſolution of this phenomenon may be given from the conſideration that, the coaſt of Barbary, ſtruck powerfully by the rays of the ſun, heats the ſurrounding air, the rarefaction of which cauſes it to riſe, and paſs into the interior part of the country, while that of the ſea, meeting with leſs reſiſtance on that ſide, immediately ruſhes into its place; but being itſelf heated, follows the former current, till, by degrees, the Mediterranean loſes a great quantity of air. By this proceſs, the air of Europe, having no longer any ſupport, diffuſes itſelf on that ſide; and thus a general current is eſtabliſhed. This will be more powerful, in proportion as the air of the north is colder; and hence the greater impetuoſity

impetuoſity of the winds in winter than in ſummer; and it will be more feeble as the air of the different countries comes nearer to an equilibrium; and hence theſe winds are more moderate in the fine ſeaſon, and in July and Auguſt terminate in a ſort of general calm, becauſe the ſun then heats almoſt equally the whole hemiſphere, even to the pole. The uniform and conſtant courſe that the north-weſt wind takes in June, is cauſed by the ſun, which, advancing as far as the parallel of Aſouan, (nearly that of the Canaries,) occaſions, behind Mount Atlas, a conſtant and regular wind. The periodical return of the eaſterly winds, at the time of each equinox, originates, no doubt, from a ſimilar cauſe; but, in order to diſcover this, it would be neceſſary to have a general table of what paſſes in other parts of the continent; and here, I confeſs, my ſyſtem ſeems to fail me. I am ignorant, alſo, of the cauſe of that uniform duration of *three days*, which we almoſt conſtantly obſerve in ſouth and north winds, whenever they blow about the equinoxes.

Differences are occaſionally obſervable in the ſame wind, which ariſe from the nature of the country. Thus, if a wind meets with a valley, it follows that direction, like the currents of the ſea. And hence, doubtleſs it happens, that in the Adriatic Gulph ſcarce any but north-weſt and ſouth-eaſterly winds are known; ſuch being the direction of that arm of the ſea. From a ſimilar cauſe, the wind in the Red-ſea blows conſtantly from the north or ſouth; and the frequency of the north-weſt, or *Miſtral*, in Provence,

vence, muſt ariſe from the currents of air, occaſioned by the Cevennes and the Alps, and which are compelled to follow the direction of the valley of the Rhone.

But what ſhall we ſay of the air thus attracted by the coaſt of Africa and the torrid zone? This we may account for in two different ways.

Firſt, the air, in theſe latitudes, forms a great current, known by the name of the Eaſtern Trade-wind, that extends, as is well known, from the Canaries to America*, which, when it has reached, it ſeems to be broken by the mountains of the continent: and thus diverted from its original direction, it returns in an oppoſite one, whence that weſterly wind which prevails under the parallel of Canada, and which thus repairs the loſſes of the polar regions.

Secondly, The air which ruſhes from the Mediterranean on Africa, rarefied there by the heat, riſes into the ſuperior region; but as it cools at

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* Dr Franklin has thought, that the cauſe of the Eaſtern Trade-wind has a connection with the diurnal motion of the earth; but were it ſo, why is not this wind perpetual? Beſides, how ſhall we explain, on this hypotheſis, the two Monſoons of India, the ſhiftings of which conſtantly follow the paſſage of the ſun over the equinoctial line; that is, the weſterly and ſouthern winds prevail during the ſix months the ſun is in the northern ſigns; and the eaſterly and northerly winds, during the ſix months he is in the ſouthern. Does not this prove, that all the varieties of the winds depend ſolely on the action of the ſun upon the atmoſphere? The moon too, which has ſo great an effect upon the ocean, may alſo produce ſome on the winds; but the influence of the other planets ſeems a chimæra ſuited only to the aſtrology of the ancients.

a certain height, the ſpace it occupies is infinitely reduced by condenſation. It may be alleged, that having recovered its weight, it ſhould deſcend; but beſides that, on returning towards the earth, it becomes again heated, and conſequently expands, it experiences a powerful and continued effort of the inferior air which ſupports it. Theſe two *ſtrata*, of the ſuperior air refrigerated, and the inferior air dilated, maintain a perpetual ſtruggle with each other. If the equilibrium be loſt, the ſuperior, obeying the law of gravity, may ruſh into the inferior region, even to the earth. To accidents of this nature we muſt aſcribe thoſe ſudden torrents of frozen air, known by the name of hurricanes and ſqualls, which ſeem to fall from heaven, and produce, in the warmeſt ſeaſons, and the hotteſt regions of the earth, the cold of the polar circles. If the ſurrounding air reſiſts, their duration is limited to a ſhort time; but when they fall in with currents already eſtabliſhed, they encreaſe their violence, and become tempeſts, which laſt ſeveral hours. Theſe tempeſts are dry when the air is pure; but when it is loaded with clouds, they are attended with a deluge of rain and hail, which the cold air condenſes in its fall. It may alſo happen that a continued fall of water ſhall accompany the rupture, increaſed by the ſurrounding clouds, attracted to the ſame vortex; and hence will reſult thoſe columns of water, known by the name of *Typhons* and *water-ſpouts*, which Dr Franklin has explained in the ſame way. Theſe water-ſpouts are not unuſual on the coaſt of Syria

Syria, towards Cape Wedjh and Mount Carmel; and it is remarkable that they are moſt frequent at the equinoxes, and in a ſtormy clouded ſky.

High mountains often illuſtrate this deſcent of refrigerated air from the upper region. When their ſummits are covering with ſnow, at the approach of winter, impetuous torrents of wind, called by mariners *ſnow winds*, ruſh down from them. They then ſay, *the mountains are defending themſelves*, becauſe theſe winds blow on you, in whatever direction you approach them. The gulphs of Lyons and Alexandretta are obſerved frequently to furniſh inſtances of this.

On the ſame principles we may explain the phænomena of thoſe coaſt winds, commonly called *land breezes*. It is remarked by mariners, that, in the Mediterranean, they blow from the land through the night, and from the ſea through the day; the cauſe of which is, that the air, rarefied by the heat of the day, and condenſed by the coldneſs of the night, ruſhes alternately from the land to the ſea, and the ſea to the land. Thus, in Syria, the ſide of Lebanon oppoſite the ſea, being heated by the ſun during the day, and eſpecially towards noon, the air, on its declivity, being rarefied, and loſing its relative equilibrium with that of the ſea, is forced upwards; but the new air, which takes its place, becoming heated, likewiſe, ſoon follows it, until, by this ſucceſſion, a current is formed ſimilar to that we obſerve in the funnels of a ſtove or chimney: this is often ſenſible to the eye; but it is rendered ſtill more evident by approaching

proaching a ſilk thread or a piece of down to the funnels. When the ſun ſets, this action ceaſes, the mountain cools, the air condenſes, and, condenſing, becomes heavier, and falls down again, thus forming a torrent which ruſhes along the declivity to the ſea. The current ceaſes in the morning, on the ſun's return, and the ſame round is repeated. This wind does not advance above two or three leagues into the ſea, becauſe the impulſe of its fall is gradually deſtroyed by the reſiſtance of the maſs of air into which it enters. The extent of the land breeze is in proportion to the height and ſteepneſs of this declivity. It reaches further at the foot of Lebanon, and the northern chain of eminences, becauſe the mountains in that quarter are loftier, ſteeper, and nearer to the ſea; and there are often violent and ſudden ſqualls at the mouth of the Kaſmia*, where the deep valley of Bekaa collecting the air in its narrow channel, propels it as from a funnel. Theſe winds do not extend ſo far on the coaſt of Paleſtine, becauſe the mountains there are not ſo lofty, and between them and the ſea there is a plain of four or five leagues; and at Gaza, and on the coaſt of Egypt, they are never known, becauſe that country has no declivity proper to cauſe them. In a word they are univerſally ſtronger in ſummer, than in winter, becauſe the heat and rarefaction are leſs conſiderable in that ſeaſon.

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* Theſe ſqualls are ſo violent, that they ſometimes overſet boats; as I was once very near experiencing myſelf.

This comparative ſituation of the air, the ſea, and continents, occaſions a phenomenon obſerved long ſince, viz. the univerſal quality of all land, but eſpecially mountains, to attract clouds. Whoever has obſerved different ſea coaſts, cannot but have remarked that clouds continually riſe at ſea, and regularly direct their courſe to the land, eſpecially the higheſt mountains. Philoſophers have attributed this to an *attractive virtue*; but beſides that, this *occult quality* is as little underſtood as the ancient *horror of a vacuum*, the mechanical cauſe of that phenomenon may be explained by material agents; I mean the law of the equilibrium of fluids, by which the heavier air forces the lighter upwards; for continents, under the ſame parallel, and elevation, being always more heated than ſeas, a conſtant current of air takes place, and drives the clouds from the ſea to the land. This direction will be the more regular as the mountains are heated. If the vapours meet with a flat and level country, they will paſs over it without falling, becauſe the land being equally heated, there is nothing to condenſe them. This is the reaſon why it never, or but very rarely, rains, in ſummer, in Egypt, or the deſerts of Arabia and Africa. The air of theſe countries being heated and rarefied, raiſes the clouds, and, as all vapour is elevated by hot air, they continue to float in the middle region, where the prevailing current carries them to the higher parts of the continent, which perform, in ſome meaſure, as I have already ſaid, the office of a chimney. Being then at a greater diſtance from the earth, which

which is the great receptacle of heat, they are refrigerated and condenſed, till their particles collect into rain or ſnow. In winter, the effects alter with circumſtances. When the ſun is remote from the countries we are ſpeaking of, the earth being leſs heated, the air in general aſſumes a temperature more nearly approaching to that of the high mountains; it becomes colder and more denſe; the vapours are no longer elevated to the ſame height; the clouds are formed lower down; and frequently fall quite to the earth, and are called fogs. At this period, accumulated by the weſterly winds, and by the abſence of the currents which carry them off in ſummer, they are compelled to fall upon the plains, and hence the ſolution of the problem *: "The evaporation being more abundant in "ſummer than in winter, why are there more "clouds, fogs, and rains in winter than in ſum-"mer?" Hence alſo we are enabled to explain another appearance both in Egypt and Paleſtine †, "that if there be a continual and gentle rain, "it will fall rather in the night than in the "day." In theſe countries, it is generally remarked that clouds and fogs approach the earth at night, and riſe from it in the day, becauſe the preſence of the ſun always excites a degree of heat ſufficient to raiſe them; I have often experienced the truth of this at Cairo, in the months of July and Auguſt, 1783. At ſun-

* See Chap IV.

† I have obſerved this in Paleſtine, in the months of November, December, and January, 1784 and 1785. The temperature of the plain of Paleſtine, eſpecially towards Gaza, is nearly the ſame with that of Egypt.

riſe, we frequently had a fog, the thermometer being at ſeventeen degrees *; two hours after, the thermometer being at twenty, or, perhaps, tweny-four degrees, the ſky was covered with ſcattered clouds driving to the ſouth. On my return from Suez, about the ſame time, that is, between the 24th and 26th of July, we had no fog during the two nights we paſſed in the deſert; but on arriving, at break of day, in ſight of the valley of Egypt, I obſerved it covered with a body of vapours which had the appearance of a ſtagnant lake. As the day came on, they began to move and riſe, and, before eight o'clock in the morning, they had left the ground, and the air only ſhewed ſome ſcattered clouds, which took their courſe along the valley. The following year, being among the Druzes, I obſerved nearly ſimilar phænomena. Firſt, about the end of June, there was formed a chain of clouds, to be attributed, no doubt, to the overflowing of Egypt by the Nile †, and which in fact, proceeded from that quarter, and were paſſing to the north-eaſt ‡. After this firſt irruption, towards the end of July, and in Auguſt, there was a ſecond ſeaſon of clouds. Every day, towards eleven o'clock, or about noon, the ſky was overcaſt, the ſun was often inviſible

* By Reaumur's ſcale, (anſwering to 70 of Fahrenheit's).

† It is not ſuperfluous to obſerve that the Nile, at that period, cauſes a current along the whole coaſt of Syria, which extends from Gaza to Cyprus.

‡ This appears to me to be the column of clouds mentioned by Baron de Tott. I have alſo obſerved the miſtineſs of the horizon of Egypt, of which he ſpeaks.

inviſible the whole afternoon, the *ſannin*, or ſummit of Lebanon, was capped with clouds, and many of them, aſcending the declivities, remained among the vineyards and the pines, and I was frequently ſo enveloped in a white, humid, warm and opake miſt, as not to be able to ſee four paces before me. About ten or eleven at night, the ſky grew clear, the ſtars appeared, and the remainder of the night was very fine; the ſun roſe ſhining, and, towards noon, the like appearances returned in the ſame circle. This repetition puzzled me the more, as I could not conceive what became of all this quantity of clouds. Part of them, it is true, paſſed the chain of the Sannin; theſe I might ſuppoſe had proceeded to Anti-Lebanon, or the deſert; but what was to become of that portion which was paſſing along the declivity, at the moment the ſun ſet, for there was neither dew nor rain into which they could be reſolved? To diſcover the cauſe of this, I aſcended ſeveral mornings ſucceſſively, at day-break, a neighbouring eminence, and there looking down upon the valley, and the ſea, diſtant, in an oblique line, about five leagues, I examined attentively the ſtate of the atmoſphere. I at firſt perceived nothing but a body of vapours which veiled the waters; and the horizon, towards the ſea, appeared to me very thick, while on the ſide of the mountains it was quite clear. As the ſun enlightened that part, I diſcovered clouds by the reflection of his rays; theſe at firſt ſeemed to me very low; but, as the heat encreaſed, they ſeparated, and roſe higher, and

continually proceeding towards the mountain, continued there the remainder of the day, as I have described. From hence I concluded that the clouds I saw, thus mounting, formed a great part of those which were on the declivities in the evening, and which, not being able to rise sufficiently high, had been seized by the cold air, and thrown back on the sea, by the land breeze; I imagined that they were retained there the whole night, till the sea breeze, getting up, drove them back upon the mountain, and hurried part of them over the top, to fall in dews on the opposite side, or to moisten the scorching air in the desert.

I have already remarked that these clouds conveyed no dews; and that there were fewer when the sky was clouded, than when the heavens were clear. But the dew is always less abundant on these mountains, than on the coast, and in Egypt, which may be easily explained, by supposing that the air is not able to elevate to that height the excess of humidity with which it is loaded; for the dew, as it is well known, is the excess of humidity which the heated air raises in vapour during the day, and which, condensing by the coolness of the evening, falls down again in greater or less abundance, according to the vicinity of the country to the sea. This resolves a question proposed to me at Yafa; viz. "Why one sweats more "at Yafa, on the borders of the sea, than at "Ramla, which is at three leagues distance up "the country?" The reason is, that the air of Yafa, being saturated with humid particles,

imbibes

imbibes the emanations of the body but slowly, while at Ramla, the air being more dry, absorbs them faster. For this reason, also, the breath is visible in winter, in our climates, and not in summer. Hence the excessive dews in the Delta, which are less considerable in the Thebais, and the desert, as I am well assured; and if the moisture does not fall when the heavens are obscured, it is owing to its assuming the form of clouds, or being intercepted by them.

At other times when the sky is serene, we see the clouds sometimes disperse and dissolve, like smoke; at others, form in an instant, and from a small speck, become of a prodigious size. This is particularly observable at the summit of Lebanon, and mariners have experienced that, the appearance of a cloud, on this peak, is an infallible presage of a westerly wind. At sun-set, I have often observed these light clouds adhering to the sides of the rocks of Nahr-el-Kelb, and augmenting so rapidly, that in an hour the valley was quite full of them. The inhabitants say, they are the vapours of the valley itself; but this valley being all stone, and without water, it is impossible they should be exhalations from that; it is more natural to suppose them vapours of the atmosphere, which, condensed at the approach of night, fall in an imperceptible rain, and cause the mist which is then observed. Fogs are explicable on the same principles. There are none in the hot countries distant from the sea, nor during the summer droughts; for, in these

ceases, the air has no surplus of humidity. But they appear after the autumnal rains, and, even in summer, after heavy showers, because the earth has then imbibed matter for evaporation, and acquired a degree of coolness sufficient to cause a condensation of the vapours. In our climates, they always begin in the meadows, in preference to tilled ground. We frequently observe, at the setting of the sun, a sheet of smoke, forming on the grass, which soon increases in extent and height; which is owing to humid and cool places condensing the falling vapours sooner than dry or dusty.

Many other remarks might be made on the formation and nature of these vapours, which though, in fact the same, are called fogs, when they rest on the ground, and clouds, when they rise into the air. By considering their various properties, we shall perceive they are governed by the laws of combination, dissolution, precipitation, and saturation; of which modern physics, under the appellation of chemistry, is employed in developing the theory. But to enter upon them here, I should be obliged to enter into details which would lead me too far from my subject, I shall therefore, only add one remark as to thunder.

Thunder is heard in the Delta as well as Syria; but with this difference, that in the former, and the plain of Palestine, it is very rare in summer, and more frequent in winter; while in the mountains, it is more frequent in summer. In both countries, it happens oftenest in the rainy season, or about the time of the equinoxes,

equinoxes, especially the autumnal one; it is further remarkable, that it never comes on from the land-side, but always from the sea. The storms which fall on the Delta and Syria constantly come from the Mediterranean *. These storms, in general, happen either in the evening or morning, and rarely in the middle of the day †; they are accompanied with violent showers, and sometimes with hail, which in an hour's time, render the country full of little lakes. These circumstances, and, especially this perpetual connection of clouds with thunder, may suggest the following remarks.

If clouds constantly attend thunder, and are absolutely necessary to its existence, it must be occasioned by some of their elements. But how are clouds formed? By the evaporation of water. How is this effected? By the element of fire. Water is not of itself volatile; some agent is necessary to raise it; this is fire; and hence, as has been already said, "evaporation is always in proportion to the heat applied to water."

* I do not know what passes in this respect in Upper Egypt: as for the Delta, it appears that it sometimes receives clouds and thunder from the Red Sea. On the day that I left Cairo, (September 26th, 1783,) as night was coming on, a storm appeared in the south-east, which soon produced several claps of thunder, and ended by a violent fall of hail, as large as the largest sort of peas. It continued ten or twelve minutes; and my companions and I had time enough to collect a quantity of hail-stones, sufficient to fill two large glasses, and could say that we had drank iced water in Egypt. It is proper to add that it was at the time when the southerly monsoon begins to blow on the Red-Sea.

† M. Niebuhr has also observed, at Moka and Bombay, that storms always proceed from the sea.

"ter." Every particle of water is rendered volatile by a particle of fire, and, unqueſtionably, alſo, by a particle of air combined with it. This combination may be conſidered as a neutral ſalt, and, comparing it with nitre, we may ſay the water in it repreſents the alkali, and the fire the nitrous acid. The clouds, thus compoſed, float in the atmoſphere until they meet with ſomething which diſunites their conſtituent parts. If, by any cauſe, theſe particles are ſuddenly ſeparated, a detonation follows, accompanied, as in nitre, with exploſion and light. The fiery matter, and the air, being inſtantly diſſipated by the ſhock, the water which was united with them, reſtored to its natural gravity, falls precipitately from the height to which it had been elevated; and hence the violent ſhowers which follow loud claps of thunder, and which happen, generally, at the end of ſtorms, the igneous matter being then expended. Sometimes the particles of fire being combined with the air only, it melts like nitre; and this it is, doubtleſs, which produces thoſe lightnings, when no thunder is heard, called fires of the horizon *(feux d'horizon)*.* But is this igneous matter diſtinct from the electric? Does it obſerve peculiar laws and affinities in its combinations and detonations? This is what I ſhall not take upon me to examine. Theſe reſearches are irrelevant in

* Falling ſtars ſeem alſo to be a particular combination of igneous matter. The Maronites of Mar-Elias aſſured me that one of theſe ſtars falling, three years ago, on two mules of the convent, killed them both, making an exploſion like the report of a piſtol, and leaving no more ſmoke than thunder.

in a book of travels: I muſt confine myſelf to facts; and I have already expatiated ſufficiently in having added theſe explanations which the facts ſtated naturally preſent.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the Inhabitants of Syria.

SYRIA, has undergone ſo many revolutions, that its inhabitants are a mingled race of different nations. Within two thouſand five hundred years, we may reckon ten invaſions, which have introduced into that country a ſucceſſion of foreign nations. Firſt, the Aſſyrians of Nineveh, who paſſed the Euphrates about 750 years before our æra, and took poſſeſſion, within 60 years, of all the country which lies to the north of Judea. Theſe being deſtroyed by their dependants, the Chaldeans of Babylon, the latter ſucceeded, as by hereditary right, to their poſſeſſions, and completed the conqueſt of Syria, the Iſle of Tyre alone excepted. To the Chaldeans ſucceeded the Perſians of Cyrus, and theſe in their turn were conquered by the Macedonians of Alexander. It would naturally have been expected that Syria would have ceaſed to be a vaſſal to foreign powers, and that it would eſtabliſh its own government, in conformity to the natural right of every country; but the people, who found in the Seleucidæ only cruel deſpots and oppreſſors,

oppreſſors, ſeeing themſelves reduced to the neceſſity of bearing ſome yoke, preferred the lighteſt; and Syria became, by the arms of Pompey, a province of Rome.

Five centuries after, when the ſons of Theodoſius divided their immenſe patrimony, this country changed the capital to which it was to appertain, without changing its maſters, and was annexed to the empire of Conſtantinople. Such was its ſituation when, in the year 622, the Arabian tribes, collected under the banners of Mahomet, ſeized, or rather laid it waſte. Since that period, torn to pieces by the civil wars of the Fatmites, and the Ommiades, wreſted from the Caliphs by their rebellious governors, taken from them by the Turkman ſoldiery, invaded by the European cruſaders, retaken by the Mamlouks of Egypt, and ravaged by Tamerlane and his Tartars, it has at length fallen into the hands of the Ottoman Turks, who have been its maſters for two hundred and ſixty-eight years.

Theſe viciſſitudes have introduced into the country diſtinct tribes of inhabitants, as various as the revolutions it has undergone, ſo that the people of Syria muſt not be conſidered as one ſingle nation, but as an aſſemblage of many.

They may be divided into three principal claſſes: Firſt, The poſterity of the people conquered by the Arabs, that is, the Greeks of the Lower Empire. Secondly, The poſterity of the Arabian conquerors. Thirdly, The preſent rulers, the Ottoman Turks.

Of

Of these three classes, the two first must be again subdivided, in consequence of several distinctions which have taken place among them.

The Greeks then must be divided into, First, Greeks proper, vulgarly called *Schismatics*, or separated from the Romish communion. Secondly, Latin Greeks, re-united to that communion. Thirdly, Maronites, or Greeks of the sect of the Monk Maron, formerly independent of the two communions, but at present united to the latter.

The Arabs must be divided into, First, The proper descendents of the conquerors, who have greatly intermixed their blood, and are considerably the most numerous. Secondly, The Motoualis, distinguished from these by their religious opinions. Thirdly, The Druzes, distinct likewise, from the same reason. Lastly, The Ansarians, who are also descended from the Arabs.

To these people, who are the cultivators and settled inhabitants of Syria, we must add three other wandering tribes of shepherds, viz. the Turkmans, the Curds, and the Bedouin Arabs.

Such are the different races dispersed over the country, between the sea and the desert, from Gaza to Alexandretta.

In this enumeration, it is remarkable that the ancient inhabitants have no remaining representative; their distinguishing characteristics are lost and confounded in those of the Greeks, who, in fact, by a continued residence from the days of Alexander, have had sufficient time entirely to supplant the aboriginal inhabitants; the country itself, and a few traits of ancient manners

ners and cuſtoms, are all that remain of ages that are paſſed away.

Foreigners are not prevented by natural cauſes, as in Egypt, from ſettling in Syria. This country is congenial to almoſt every conſtitution. The features and complexion are governed by nearly the ſame laws there as in the ſouth of Europe, with the differences only which naturally reſult from the nature of the climate. Thus the inhabitants of the ſouthern plains are more ſwarthy than thoſe of the northern, and theſe, more ſo than the inhabitants of the mountains. In Lebanon, and the country of the Druzes, the complexion does not differ from that in our provinces in the middle of France. The women of Damaſcus and Tripoli are greatly boaſted for their fairneſs, and even the regularity of their features; but we muſt take this praiſe on truſt, ſince the veil, which they perpetually wear, allows no perſon to make nice obſervations. In ſeveral diſtricts, the women are leſs ſcrupulous, without being leſs chaſte. In Paleſtine, for example, you may ſee married women almoſt uncovered; but want and fatigue have robbed the countenance of all its charms; their eyes alone are almoſt every where beautiful; and the long drapery, which forms their general dreſs, permits the body freely to diſplay its ſhape: it is ſometimes without elegance, but its proportions at leaſt are no way injured. I do not recollect having ſeen in Syria, nor even in Egypt, two perſons crooked or deformed. It is true they are ſtrangers to thoſe tight-laced waiſts, which are ſo much admired among us: they

they are in no eſtimation in the eaſt; and the young women, aſſiſted by their mothers, very early ſtudy, even ſuperſtitious receipts, to acquire an *embonpoint:* happily, Nature, by reſiſting our caprices, has ſet bounds to our ſingularities, for we do not find that in Syria, where the ſhape is unconfined, that the body becomes larger than in France, where it is tightly laced.

The Syrians, in general, are of a middling ſtature, and, as in all warm countries, are leſs corpulent than the inhabitants of the north. We find, however, in the cities, ſome individuals whoſe rotundity of belly proves how much the influence of diet, in a certain degree, counterbalances that of climate.

There is no diſeaſe peculiar to Syria, but the pimple of Aleppo, which I ſhall notice when I come to ſpeak of that city. The diſorders prevalent here are dyſenteries, inflammatory and intermittent fevers, which are the conſequences of the bad fruit which the people greedily devour. The ſmall-pox is ſometimes very fatal; but the general and moſt frequent illneſs is the cholic, the cauſes of which are very evident, when we conſider that every body eats to exceſs of unripe fruit, raw vegetables, honey, cheeſe, olives, ſtrong oil, ſour milk, and ill-fermented bread. Theſe are the uſual food of all the inhabitants; and the acid juices they contain produce crudities, nauſea, and even frequent vomitings of bile. Accordingly, the firſt preſcription in almoſt all diſorders is an emetic, which method of treatment, however, is only known to the European phyſicians. Bleeding, as I

have already ſaid, is neither neceſſary, nor very uſeful. In leſs urgent caſes, cream of tartar and tamarinds have the moſt general ſucceſs.

The almoſt univerſal language of Syria is Arabic. M. Niebuhr reports, upon hearſay, that the Syriac is ſtill uſed in ſome villages of the mountains; but, though I interrogated, on this ſubject, ſeveral monks, who are perfectly well acquainted with the country, I have not been able to learn any thing like it. I have been told only that, in the towns of Maloula and Sidnaia, near Damaſcus, they ſpeak a dialect ſo corrupted, that it is difficult to be underſtood. But this difficulty proves nothing, ſince, in Syria, as in all the Arabian countries, the dialects vary at every place. The Syriac may be, therefore, regarded as a dead language; for the Maronites, who have preſerved it in their liturgy, and in their maſs, underſtand very little of it, while they recite them. We may aſſert the ſame of the Greek. Among the monks and ſchiſmatic prieſts, there are very few who have any knowledge of it, unleſs they have made it their particular ſtudy in the iſlands of the Archipelago: beſides, we know that the modern Greek is ſo corrupted, that it would no more enable a man to underſtand Demoſthenes, than the Italian to read Cicero. The Turkiſh language is only uſed, in Syria, by the military, perſons in office, and the Turkman hordes*. Some of the natives learn it, as the Turks learn Arabic, to facilitate

* Turkiſh is ſpoken at Alexandretta, and Beilam, which is contiguous; but they muſt be regarded as frontiers of Caramania, where Turkiſh is the vulgar tongue.

facilitate their dealings with ſtrangers: but the pronunciation and accent of theſe two languages have ſo little analogy that they always continue foreign to each other. The Turks, habituated to a naſal and pompous proſody, are rarely able to imitate the harſh ſounds and ſtrong aſpirations of the Arabic. This tongue abounds ſo in harſh vowels and guttural conſonants that, on hearing it ſpoken for the firſt time, you would imagine they were gargling their throats. On this account it is diſagreeable and difficult to all Europeans; but ſuch is the power of habit that, when we complain to the Arabs of its aſperity, they accuſe us of a want of ear, and retort the charge upon our languages; among which they give the preference to the Italian; and they compare, with ſome reaſon, the French to the Turkiſh, and the Engliſh to the Perſian. In the dialects of their own we find almoſt the ſame difference. The Arabic of Syria is much harſher than that of Egypt; the pronunciation of the profeſſors of the law of Cairo is eſteemed a model of facility and elegance. But, according to the obſervation of M. Niebuhr, that of the inhabitants of the Yemen, and the ſouthern coaſt, is infinitely ſofter, and gives a fluency to the Arabic, of which he could not have thought it ſuſceptible. Attempts have been made to eſtabliſh an analogy between the climates and the pronunciation of languages; it has been ſaid, for inſtance, that the inhabitants of the north ſpeak more with their lips and teeth than thoſe of the ſouth. This may be juſt when applied to ſome parts of our continent; but, to decide

univerſally, we muſt make more circumſtantial and extenſive obſervations. We ſhould not too haſtily pronounce theſe general deciſions concerning languages and their different characters: becauſe we are always naturally led to judge by compariſon with our own, and, conſequently, are influenced by a prejudice which is very likely to miſlead us.

Among the different inhabitants of Syria I have mentioned, ſome are diſperſed, indifferently, over every part of the country, others confine themſelves to particular ſpots, which it will be proper to particularize.

The Greeks proper, the Turks, and the Arabian peaſants, belong to the former claſs, with this difference, that the Turks reſide only in the towns where they are in poſſeſſion of the military employments, and the offices of the magiſtracy, and where they exerciſe the arts. The Arabs and the Greeks inhabit the villages, and form the claſs of huſbandmen in the country, and the inferior people in the towns. The part of the country which contains the moſt Greek villages is the Pachalic of Damaſcus.

The Greeks of the Romiſh communion, who are much leſs numerous than the ſchiſmatics, are all retired within the towns, where they cultivate the arts and commerce. The protection of the Franks, has procured them a decided ſuperiority in trade, wherever there are European ſettlements.

The Maronites form a national body, which occupies, almoſt excluſively, the whole country compriſed

compriſed between Nahr-el-kelb (the river of the Dog) and Nahr-el-bared (the cold river), from the ſummit of the mountains on the eaſt, to the Mediterranean on the weſt.

The Druzes are their immediate neighbours, their country extends from Nahr-el-kelb to the neighbourhood of Sour (Tyre), between the valley of Bekaa and the ſea.

The country of the Motoualis formerly included the valley of Bekaa, as far as Sour: but this people, of late years, have undergone a revolution which has reduced them almoſt to nothing.

As for the Anſarians they are ſcattered among the mountains from Nahr-akkar as far as Antakia; they are diſtinguiſhed into different tribes, ſuch as the Kelbia, the Kadmouſia, the Shamſia, &c.

The Turkmans, the Curds, and the Bedouins, have no fixed habitations, but are perpetually wandering with their tents and herds, in limited diſtricts, of which they look upon themſelves as the proprietors. The Turkman hordes generally encamp on the plain of Antioch; the Curds in the mountains between Alexandretta and the Euphrates; and the Arabs ſpread over the whole frontier of Syria, adjacent to their deſerts, and even the plains of the interior part of the country, as thoſe of Paleſtine, Bekaa, and Galilee.

To form more diſtinct ideas of theſe different claſſes, let us conſider more circumſtantially what is peculiar to each of them.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the Paſtoral or Wandering Tribes of Syria.

SECT. I.

Of the Turkmans.

THE Turkmans are of the number of thoſe Tartar hordes, who, on the great revolutions of the empire of the Caliph, emigrated from the eaſtward of the Caſpian ſea, and ſpread themſelves over the vaſt plains of Armenia and Aſia Minor. Their language is the ſame with that of the Turks, and their mode of life nearly ſimilar to that of the Bedouin Arabs. Like them, they are paſtors, and conſequently obliged to travel over immenſe tracts of land to procure ſubſiſtence for their numerous herds. But there is this difference, that the countries frequented by the Turkmans being rich in paſturage, they can feed more cattle on them, and are therefore leſs diſperſed than the Arabs of the deſert. Each of their *Ordous*, or camps, acknowledges a Chief, whoſe power is not determined by fixed laws, but governed by cuſtom and circumſtances. It is rarely abuſed, becauſe the ſociety is compact, and the nature of their ſituation maintains ſufficient equality among its members. Every man able to bear arms is anxious to carry them, ſince on his individual force depend both

both his perſonal ſafety, and the reſpect paid him by his companions. All their property conſiſts in cattle, that is camels, buffaloes, goats, and eſpecially ſheep. They live on milk, butter, and meat, which are in great abundance among them, and the ſurplus of which they ſell in the towns and the neighbouring country, for they are almoſt able alone to ſupply the butcheries. In return, they take arms, clothes, money, and corn. Their women ſpin wool, and make carpets, which have been in uſe in theſe countries from time immemorial, and conſequently indicates their manner of living to have been always the ſame. As for the men, their whole occupation conſiſts in ſmoking, and looking after their flocks. Perpetually on horſeback, with their lances on their ſhoulders, their crooked ſabres by their ſides, and their piſtols in their belts, they are expert horſemen and indefatigable ſoldiers. They have frequent differences with the Turks, who dread them; but as they are divided among themſelves, and form ſeparate camps, they do not aſſume that ſuperiority which their combined forces would enſure them. The Pachalics of Aleppo and Damaſcus, which are the only parts of Syria they frequent, may be computed to contain about thirty thouſand wandering Turkmans. A great number of theſe tribes paſs, in ſummer, into Armenia and Caramania, where they find graſs in greater abundance, and return to their former quarters in the winter. The Turkmans are reputed Muſſulmen, and generally bear the diſtinguiſhing mark, circumciſion. But they trouble

ble themſelves very little about religion, and they have neither the ceremonies, nor the fanaticiſm of ſedentary nations. As for their manners, to deſcribe them accurately, it would be neceſſary to have lived among them. They have, however, the reputation of not being robbers, like the Arabs, though they are neither leſs generous, nor leſs hoſpitable than they; and when we conſider that they live in plenty, without being rich, and are inured to war, and hardened by fatigue and danger, we may preſume they are equally removed from the corruption of towns and the abaſement of the country.

SECT. II.

Of the Curds.

THE Curds are another body of the nation whoſe divided tribes are equally diſperſed over Lower Aſia, and have extended themſelves very widely, eſpecially within the laſt hundred years. Their original country is the chain of mountains from whence iſſue the different branches of the Tigris, which ſurrounding the upper part of the great Zab, paſſes to the ſouthward, as far as the frontiers of the Irak-adjami, or Perſian Irak*. In modern geography, it is known by the name of *Curd-eſtan*. It is very fertile in grain, lint, ſeſame, and rice; it abounds in excellent paſturage, and produces gall-nuts and even ſilk. There are alſo ſweet acorns gathered about two or

* *Adjam* is the name of the Perſians in Arabic. The Greeks were acquainted with it, and expreſſed it by *Achemenides*.

or three inches long, of which they make a ſpecies of bread. This country is mentioned in the moſt ancient traditions and hiſtories of the eaſt, in which it is made the ſcene of ſeveral mythological events. The Chaldean Beroſus, and the Armenian Maribas, cited by Moſes Chorenenſis, aſſert that it was in the mountains Gord-onæi* that Xiſuthrus landed after eſcaping from the deluge; and the local circumſtances which they add, prove, what was otherwiſe ſufficiently evident, that *Gord* and *Curd* are the ſame. Thoſe were the ſame Curds who are mentioned by Xenophon under the denomination of *Card-uchi*, and who oppoſed the retreat of the Ten Thouſand. This hiſtorian obſerves that, though ſhut in on all ſides by the Perſian empire, they had conſtantly braved the power of the *Great King*, and the arms of his *Satraps*. They have changed but little in their modern ſtate; for, though, in appearance, tributaries to the Porte, they pay very little reſpect to the orders of the Grand Signior, or his Pachas. M. Niebuhr, who travelled in theſe countries in 1769, reports, that in their mountains they are ſubject to a ſort of feodal government, which appears to me ſimilar to that we obſerve among the Druzes. Each village has its chief, and the whole nation is divided into different and independant factions. The diſputes inſeparable from this ſtate of anarchy have detached from the nation a great number of tribes and families, which have adopted the wandering life of the Turk-

* Strabo, lib. 11 ſays, that the Niphates, and its chain of mountains, are called *Gordonæi*.

Turkmans and Arabs. Theſe are diſperſed in the Diarbekir, and over the plains of Arzroum, Erivan, Sivas, Aleppo and Damaſcus: all their hordes united are eſtimated to exceed one hundred and forty thouſand *tents*, that is, one hundred and forty thouſand armed men. Like the Turkmans, theſe Curds are paſtors and wanderers; but differ from them in ſome particular cuſtoms. The Turkmans give their daughters a marriage dower: the Curds receive a premium for them. The Turkmans pay no reſpect to that antiquity of extraction which we call nobility: the Curds honour it above every thing. The Turkmans do not ſteal: the Curds are almoſt every where looked upon as plunderers; on which account, they are much dreaded in the neighbourhood of Aleppo, and of Antioch, where they occupy, under the name of Bagdaſhlia, the mountains to the eaſt of Beilam, as far as near Kles. In this Pachalic, and in that of Damaſcus, their number exceeds twenty thouſand tents and huts; for they have alſo fixed habitations. They are reputed Mahometans; but they never trouble themſelves about religious rites or opinions. Several of them, diſtinguiſhed by the name of Yazdia, worſhip *Shaitan*, or Satan, that is, the genius who is the *enemy* (of God). This notion, eſpecially prevalent in the Diarbekir, and the frontiers of Perſia, is a relic of the ancient ſyſtem of the *good* and *evil principles*, which varied according to the ſpirit of the Perſian, Jewiſh, Chriſtian, and Mahometan doctrines, has continually prevailed in theſe countries. Zoroaſter is generally

ly conſidered as its author; but, long before his time, Egypt acknowledged Oroſmades and Arimanius, under the names of Oſiris and Typhon. It is no leſs an error, likewiſe, to ſuppoſe, that this dogma was not propagated prior to the reign of Darius Hyſtaſpes, ſince Zoroaſter, who taught it, flouriſhed in Media while Solomon reigned in Judea.

Language is the principal indication of the conſanguinity of nations. That of the Curds has ſeveral diverſities of dialect; but the ground is Perſian with a mixture of ſeveral Arabic and Kaldean words. Their alphabetical letters are purely Perſian. The propaganda has cauſed to be printed at Rome, a vocabulary compoſed by Maurice Garzoni, which affords ſatisfactory inſtructions on this ſubject. It were to be wiſhed that every government would encourage this ſpecies of reſearch. Doctor Pallas has publiſhed a great number of comparative vocabularies but unfortunately they are in Ruſſian characters; and I am afraid the Ruſſian nation will have ſome difficulty in perſuading Europe to prefer their characters to the Roman.

SECT. III.

Of the Bedouin Arabs.

A third wandering people in Syria, are the Bedouin Arabs, whom we have already found in Egypt. Of theſe I made but a ſlight mention in treating of that province, becauſe, having only had a tranſient view of them, without knowing their language, their name ſuggeſted

ed but few ideas to my mind; but having been better acquainted with them in Syria; having even made a journey to one of their camps, near Gaza, and lived several days among them, I am furnished with several facts and observations which I shall proceed to detail.

In general, when speaking of the Arabs, we should distinguish whether they are cultivators, or pastors; for this difference in their mode of life occasions so great a one in their manners, and genius, that they become almost foreign nations, with respect to each other. In the former case, leading a sedentary life, attached to the same soil, and subject to regular governments, the social state in which they live, very nearly resembles our own. Such are the inhabitants of the Yemen: and such, also, are the descendants of those ancient conquerors, who have either entirely, or in part, given inhabitants to Syria, Egypt, and the Barbary states. In the second case, having only a transient interest in the soil, perpetually removing their tents from one place to another, and under subjection to no laws, their mode of existence is neither that of polished nations, nor of savages; and, therefore, more particularly merits our attention. Such are the Bedouins, or inhabitants of the vast deserts which extend from the confines of Persia, to Morocco. Though divided into independent communities, or tribes, not unfrequently hostile to each other, they may still be considered as forming one nation. The resemblance of their language is a manifest token of this relationship. The only difference, that

that exists between them is, that the African tribes are of a less ancient origin, being posterior to the conquest of these countries by the Caliphs, or successors of Mahomet; while the tribes of the desert of Arabia, properly so called, have descended by an uninterrupted succession from the remotest ages; and it is of these I mean more especially to treat, as being more immediately connected with my subject. To these the orientals are accustomed to appropriate the name of Arabs, as being the most ancient, and the purest race. The term *Bedaoui* is added as a synonimous expression, signifying, as I have observed, inhabitant of the *Desert*; and this term has the greater propriety, as the word *Arab*, in the ancient language of these countries, signifies properly a solitude or desert.

It is not without reason that the inhabitants of the desert boast of being the purest and the best preserved race of all the Arab tribes: for never have they been conquered, nor have they mixed with any other people, by making conquests; for those by which the general name of Arabs has been rendered famous, really belong only to the tribes of the Hedjaz, and the Yemen; those who dwelt in the interior parts of the country, never emigrated at the time of the revolution effected by Mahomet; or if they did take any part in it, it was confined to a few individuals, detached by motives of ambition. Thus we find the prophet, in his Koran, continually stiling the Arabs of the desert rebels, and infidels; nor has so great a length of time produced any very considerable change. We

may aſſert they have, in every reſpect, retained their primitive independence and ſimplicity. Every thing that ancient hiſtory has related of their cuſtoms, manners, language, and even their prejudices, is almoſt minutely true of them to this day; and if we conſider, beſides, that this unity of character, preſerved through ſuch a number of ages, ſtill ſubſiſts, even in the moſt diſtant ſituations, that is, that the tribes moſt remote from each other preſerve an exact reſemblance, it muſt be allowed, that it is curious to examine the circumſtances which accompany ſo peculiar a moral ſtate.

In Europe, and eſpecially in France, where we have no examples of wandering people, we can ſcarcely conceive what can induce men to adopt a mode of life ſo repugnant to our ideas. We even conceive with difficulty what a deſert is, or how it is poſſible for a country to have inhabitants, if it be barren; or why it is not better peopled, if it be capable of cultivation. I have experienced theſe difficulties, as well as others; for which reaſon, I ſhall dwell more circumſtantially on the facts which will furniſh us with their explanation.

The wandering and paſtoral life led by ſeveral Aſiatic nations, ariſes from two cauſes. The firſt is, the nature of the ſoil, which, being improper for cultivation, compels men to have recourſe to animals, which content themſelves with the wild herbage of the earth. Where this herbage is but thin, a ſingle animal will ſoon conſume the produce of a great extent of ground, and it will be neceſſary to run over large

large tracts of land. Such is the situation of the Arabs in the desert (properly so called), of Arabia, and in that of Africa.

The second cause must be attributed to their manners, since the soil is susceptible of cultivation, and is even fertile, in many places; such as the frontiers of Syria, the Diarbekir, Natolia, and the greatest part of the districts frequented by the Curds and Turkmans. But it appears to me that these habits are only the effect of the political state of the country, so that the primary cause of them must be referred to the government itself. This opinion is supported by daily facts; for as often as the different hords and wandering tribes find peace and security, and a possibility of procuring sufficient provisions, in any district, they take up their residence in it, and adopt, insensibly, a settled life, and the arts of cultivation. But when, on the contrary, the tyranny of the government drives the inhabitants of a village to extremity, the peasants desert their houses, withdraw with their families into the mountains, or wander in the plain, taking care frequently to change their place of habitation, to avoid being surprised. It often happens even that individuals, turned robbers, in order to withdraw themselves from the laws, or from tyranny, unite and form little camps, which maintain themselves by arms, and, increasing, become new hordes, and new tribes. We may pronounce, therefore, that in cultivable countries, the wandering life originates in the injustice or want of policy of the government; and that sedentary or agricultural

employments are thoſe to which mankind are moſt naturally inclined.

With reſpect to the Arabs, they appear to be particularly condemned to a wandering life, by the very nature of their deſerts. To paint to himſelf theſe deſerts, the reader muſt imagine a ſky almoſt perpetually inflamed, and without clouds, immenſe and boundleſs plains, without houſes, trees, rivulets, or hills, where the eye frequently meets nothing but an extenſive and uniform horizon, like the ſea, though in ſome places the ground is uneven and ſtoney. Almoſt invariably naked on every ſide, the earth preſents nothing but a few wild plants, thinly ſcattered, and thickets, whoſe ſolitude is rarely diſturbed but by antelopes, hares, locuſts, and rats. Such is the nature of nearly the whole country, which ſtretches from Aleppo to the Arabian ſea, and from Egypt to the Perſian gulph, and extends ſix hundred leagues in length, and three hundred in breadth.

In this great extent of ſoil, it cannot be ſuppoſed that it is every where the ſame; it varies conſiderably in different places. On the frontiers of Syria, for example, the earth is in general fat and cultivable, nay, even fruitful. It is the ſame alſo on the banks of the Euphrates; but in the internal parts of the country, and towards the ſouth, it becomes white chalky, as in the parallel of Damaſcus; rocky, as in the Tih, and the Hedjaz; and a pure ſand, as to the eaſtward of the Yemen. This variety in the qualities of the ſoil is productive of ſome minute differences in the condition of the Bedouins.

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For inſtance, in the more ſterile countries, that is, thoſe which produce but few plants, the tribes are feeble, and very diſtant; which is the caſe in the deſert of Suez, that of the Red Sea, and the interior of the Great Deſert, called the Najd. Where the ſoil is more fruitful, as between Damaſcus and the Euphrates, the tribes are more numerous, and leſs diſtant from each other; and, laſtly, in the cultivable diſtricts, ſuch as the Pachalics of Aleppo, the Hauran, and the neighbourhood of Gaza, the camps are frequent and contiguous. In the former caſe, the Bedouins are merely paſtors, and ſubſiſt only on the produce of their herds, and on a few dates, and fleſh meat, which they eat, either freſh, or dried in the ſun, and reduced to a powder. In the latter, they ſow ſome of their land, and add cheeſe, barley, and even rice, to their fleſh and milk.

On examining the cauſes of the ſterility and uncultivated ſtate of the Deſert, we find it is chiefly to be attributed to the abſence of fountains and rivers, and, in general, to the ſcarcity of water. This ſcarcity of water itſelf is occaſioned by the nature of the country, which being flat, and deſtitute of mountains, the clouds glide over its heated ſurface, as I have already remarked is the caſe with Egypt. They never reſt there but in winter, when the coldneſs of the atmoſphere hinders them from riſing, and diſſolves them into rain. The nakedneſs of this country is alſo another cauſe of drought, ſince the air is for that reaſon more eaſily heated, and forces the clouds to riſe. It is probable

that a change of climate might be effected, were the whole desert to be planted with trees; as for example, with pine trees.

The effect produced by the winter rains is, that in those parts where the soil is good, as on the frontiers of Syria, a cultivation takes place much resembling that of even the interior parts of the province; but as these rains neither produce springs, nor constant rivulets, the inhabitants are exposed to the inconvenience of wanting water the whole summer. To remedy this it is necessary to have recourse to art, and to form wells, reservoirs, and cisterns, in which they collect their annual supplies: such works require money and labour, and are, after all, exposed to a variety of accidents. War may destroy in one day, the labour of many months, and the resources of the year. A drought, which is but too common, may cause the failure of a crop, and reduce the inhabitants even to a total want of water. It is true, that by digging it is almost every where to be found at from six to twenty feet depth, but this water is brackish, as in all the desert of Arabia and Africa *; it also often dries up, when thirst and famine follow; and, if the government does not lend its aid, the villages are deserted. It is evident that agriculture must be very precarious in such a country, and that under a government like that of the Turks, it is

* This saline quality is so inherent in the soil, that it impregnates even the plants. All those of the desert abound in alkali, and Glauber's salt; but it is remarkable that this salt diminishes as we approach the mountains, where it is hardly perceptible.

is more safe to lead a wandering life, than to dwell in a settled habitation, and depend on agriculture for subsistence.

In districts of a stoney and sandy soil, as in the Tih, the Hedjaz, and the Najd, these rains make the seeds of the wild plants shoot, and revive the thickets, ranunculas, wormwood, and kali. They render the lower grounds marshy, which then produce reeds and grass; and the plain assumes a tolerable degree of verdure. This is the season of abundance both for the herds and their masters; but on the return of the heats, every thing is parched up, and the earth, converted into a grey, and fine dust, presents nothing but dry stems, as hard as wood, on which neither horses, oxen, nor even goats can feed. In this state the desert would become uninhabitable, and must be totally abandoned, had not nature formed an animal no less hardy and frugal than the soil is sterile and ungrateful; I mean the camel. No creature seems so peculiary fitted to the climate in which it exists. We cannot doubt but the nature of the one has been adapted to that of the other by some *disposing intelligence*. Designing the camel to dwell in a country where he can find little nourishment, Nature has been sparing of her materials in the whole of his formation. She has not bestowed on him the plump fleshiness of the ox, horse, or elephant; but, limiting herself to what is strictly necessary, she has given him a small head without ears, at the end of a long neck without flesh. She has taken from his legs and thighs every muscle not immediately

mediately requiſite for motion; and, in ſhort, has beſtowed on his withered body only the veſſels and tendons neceſſary to connect its frame together. She has furniſhed him with a ſtrong jaw, that he may grind the hardeſt aliments; but leſt he ſhould conſume too much, ſhe has contracted his ſtomach, and obliged him to chew the cud. She has lined his foot with a lump of fleſh, which, ſliding in the mud, and being no way adapted to climbing, fits him only for a dry, level, and ſandy ſoil, like that of Arabia: ſhe has evidently deſtined him likewiſe to ſlavery, by refuſing him every ſort of defence againſt his enemies. Deſtitute of the horns of the bull, the hoof of the horſe, the tooth of the elephant, and the ſwiftneſs of the ſtag, how can the camel reſiſt or avoid the attacks of the lion, the tyger, or even the wolf? To preſerve the ſpecies, therefore, Nature has concealed him in the depth of the vaſt deſerts, where the want of vegetables can attract no game, and whence the want of game repels every voracious animal. Tyranny muſt have expelled man from the habitable parts of the earth, before the camel could have loſt his liberty. Become domeſtic, he has rendered habitable the moſt barren ſoil the world contains. He alone ſupplies all his maſter's wants. The milk of the camel nouriſhes the family of the Arab, under the varied forms of curds, cheeſe, and butter; and they often feed upon his fleſh. Slippers and harneſs are made of his ſkin, and tents and cloathing of his hair. Heavy burthens are tranſported by his means; and when

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the earth denies forage to the horſe, ſo valuable to the Bedouin, the ſhe camel ſupplies that deficiency by her milk, at no other coſt, for ſo many advantages, than a few ſtalks of brambles or wormwood, and pounded date kernels. So great is the importance of the camel to the deſert, that were it deprived of that uſeful animal, it muſt infallibly loſe every inhabitant*.

Such is the ſituation in which nature has placed the Bedouins, to render them a race of men equally ſingular in their phyſical and moral character. This ſingularity is ſo ſtriking, that even their neighbours, the Syrians, regard them as extraordinary beings; eſpecially thoſe tribes which dwell in the depths of the deſerts, ſuch

* I know four diſtinct ſpecies of camels. The firſt is that which I have firſt deſcribed, and which is properly the Arabian camel, the carrier of burdens, having only one hump and very little hair on the body. The ſecond is the *courier* camel, called *hedjia* at Cairo. It is more ſlender in its figure, and has alſo but one hump on his back. This is the true *dromedary* of the Greeks. We have two in Paris at preſent which were exhibited at the feaſt of the Champ du Mars. Both theſe kinds are to be found all over the country from Morocco to Perſia. The third ſpecies is the *Turkman* camel which inhabits the country between Aleppo and Conſtantinople, and to the north of Perſia It has only one hump; is not ſo tall as the Arabian camel; its legs are ſhorter and thicker, and its body is ſquat, and more completely covered with hair. Its neck hangs down to the ground, and is generally brown. The fourth is the *Tartarian* or *Bactrian* camel, which is to be found throughout China and Tartary. It has two humps. There are none but theſe to be ſeen at Pekin, yet they are ſo rare in Lower Aſia, that I could quote a number of travellers, and even Arabs, who, like myſelf, have never ſeen one. Buffon has totally confounded theſe different ſpecies.

ſuch as thoſe of Anaza, Kaibar, Tai, and others, which never approach the towns. When, in the time of Shaik Daher, ſome of their horſemen came as far as Acre, they excited the ſame curioſity there, as a viſit from the ſavages of America would among us. Every one viewed with ſurpriſe theſe men, who were more diminutive, meagre, and ſwarthy, than any of the known Bedouins. Their withered legs had no calves, and appeared to conſiſt merely of tendons. Their bellies ſeemed ſhrunk to their backs, and their hair was frizzled almoſt as much as that of the negroes. They, on the other hand, were no leſs aſtoniſhed at every thing they ſaw; they could neither conceive how the houſes and minarets could ſtand erect, nor how men ventured to dwell beneath them, and always on the ſame ſpot; but, above all, they were in an ecſtaſy at beholding the ſea, nor could they comprehend what that *deſert of water* could be. They were told of moſques, prayers, and ablutions; but they aſked what thoſe meant, and enquired who Moſes, Jeſus Chriſt, and Mahomet, were; and why, ſince the inhabitants were not of ſeparate tribes, they followed different leaders?

The Arabs of the frontiers, however, are not ſuch novices; there are even ſeveral ſmall tribes of them, who, living in the midſt of the country, as in the valley of Bekaa, that of the Jordan, and in Paleſtine, approach nearer to the condition of the peaſants; but theſe are deſpiſed by the others, who look upon them as baſtard Arabs, and *Rayas*, or ſlaves of the Turks.

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The generality of the Bedouins are ſmall, meagre, and tawny; more ſo, however, in the heart of the deſert, than on the frontiers of the cultivated country; but they are always of a darker complexion than the neighbouring peaſants. They alſo differ among themſelves in the ſame camp; and I have remarked, that the Shaiks, that is, the rich, and their attendants, were always taller, and more corpulent, than the common claſs. I have ſeen ſome of them above five feet five and ſix inches high; though, in general, they do not exceed five feet two inches, French meaſure. This difference can only be attributed to their food, with which the former are ſupplied more abundantly than the latter.* It may, alſo, be affirmed, the lower claſs of Bedouins live in a ſtate of habitual wretchedneſs and famine. It will appear almoſt incredible to us, but it is an undoubted fact, that the quantity of food uſually conſumed by the greateſt part of them, does not exceed ſix ounces a day. This abſtinence is moſt remarkable among the tribes of the Najd, and the Hedjaz. Six or ſeven dates ſoaked in melted butter, a little freſh milk, or curds, ſerve a man a whole day; and he eſteems himſelf happy, when he can add a ſmall quantity of coarſe flour, or a little ball of rice. Meat is reſerved for the greateſt feſtivals; and they never kill a kid but for a marriage or a funeral. A few wealthy and

* The effects of this are equally evident in the Arabian and Turkman camels; for theſe latter, inhabiting countries rich in forage, are become a ſpecies more robuſt and fleſhy than the former.

and generous Shaiks alone can kill young camels, and eat baked rice with their victuals. In times of dearth, the vulgar, always half famished, do not disdain the most wretched kinds of food; and eat locusts, rats, lizards, and serpents, which they boil on briars. Hence are they such plunderers of the cultivated lands, and robbers on the high-roads: hence, also, their delicate constitution, and their diminutive and meagre bodies, which are rather active than vigorous. It may be worth the attention of the physician to remark, that their evacuations of every kind, even perspiration, are extremely small; their blood is so destitute of serosity, that nothing but the greatest heat can preserve its fluidity. This, however, does not prevent them from being tolerably healthy, in other respects, for maladies are less frequent among them than among the inhabitants of the cultivated country.

Yet from these facts, we are by no means justified in concluding, that the frugality of the Arabs is a virtue purely of choice, or even of climate. The extreme heat in which they live, unquestionably facilitates their abstinence, by destroying that activity which cold gives to the stomach. Their being habituated also to so sparing a diet, by hindering the dilatation of the stomach, becomes doubtless a means of their supporting such abstemiousness; but the chief and primary cause of this habit, is with them, as with the rest of mankind, the necessity of the circumstances in which they are placed, either from the nature of the soil, as I have before explained;

plained, or that ſtate of ſociety in which they live, and which I ſhall now proceed to examine.

I have already ſaid, that the Bedouin Arabs are divided into tribes, which conſtitute ſo many diſtinct nations. Each of theſe tribes appropriates to itſelf a certain tract of land; in this they do not differ from cultivating nations, except that their territory requires a greater extent, in order to furniſh ſubſiſtence for their herds throughout the year. Each of theſe tribes is collected in one or more camps, which are diſperſed through the country, and which make a ſucceſſive progreſs over the whole, in proportion as it is exhauſted by the cattle; hence it is, that within a great extent a few ſpots only are inhabited, which vary from one day to another; but as the entire ſpace is neceſſary for the annual ſubſiſtence of the tribe, whoever encroaches on it is deemed a violator of property; this is with them the law of nations. If, therefore, a tribe, or any of its ſubjects, enter upon a foreign territory, they are treated as enemies, and robbers, and a war breaks out. Now, as all the tribes have affinities with each other by alliances of blood, or treaties, leagues are formed, which render theſe wars more or leſs general. The manner of proceeding, on ſuch occaſions, is very ſimple. The offence made known, they mount their horſes, and ſeek the enemy; when they meet, they enter into a parley, and the matter is frequently made up; if not, they attack either in ſmall bodies, or man to man. They encounter each other at full ſpeed, with fixed lances, which they ſometimes dart, not-

withſtanding their length, at the flying enemy; the victory is rarely conteſted; it is decided by the firſt ſhock, and the vanquiſhed take to flight full gallop over the naked plain of the deſert. Night generally favours their eſcape from the conqueror. The tribe which has loſt the battle ſtrikes its tents, removes to a diſtance, by forced marches, and ſeeks an aſylum among its allies. The enemy, ſatisfied with their ſucceſs, drive their herds farther on, and the fugitives ſoon after return to their former ſituation. But the ſlaughter made in theſe engagements frequently ſows the ſeeds of hatreds which perpetuate theſe diſſenſions. The intereſt of the common ſafety has, for ages, eſtabliſhed a law among them, which decrees that the blood of every man who is ſlain muſt be avenged by that of his murderer. This vengeance is called *Tar*, or retaliation; and the right of exacting it devolves on the neareſt of kin to the deceaſed. So nice are the Arabs on this point of honour, that if any one neglects to ſeek his retaliation, he is diſgraced for ever. He, therefore, watches every opportunity of revenge: if his enemy periſhes from any other cauſe, ſtill he is not ſatisfied, and his vengeance is directed againſt the neareſt relation. Theſe animoſities are tranſmitted, as an inheritance, from father to children, and never ceaſe but by the extinction of one of the families, unleſs they agree to ſacrifice the criminal, or *purchaſe the blood* for a ſtated price, in money or in flocks. Without this ſatisfaction, there is neither peace, nor truce, nor alliances between them, nor ſometimes, even between whole tribes;

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There is blood between us, say they, on every occasion; and this expression is an insurmountable barrier. Such accidents being necessarily numerous in a long course of time, the greater part of the tribes have ancient quarrels, and live in an habitual state of war; which, together with their way of life, renders the Bedouins a military people, though they have made no great progress in war as an art. Their camps are formed in a kind of irregular circle, composed of a single row of tents, with greater or less vacancies. These tents, made of goat or camels hair, are black or brown, in which they differ from those of the Turkmans, which are white. They are stretched on three or four pickets, only five or six feet high, which gives them a very flat appearance; at a distance, one of these camps seems only like a number of black spots; but the piercing eye of the Bedouin is not to be deceived. Each tent, inhabited by a family, is divided, by a current, into two apartments, one of which is appropriated to the women. The empty space within the large circle serves to fold their cattle every evening. They never have any intrenchments; their only advanced guards and patroles are dogs; their horses remain saddled, and ready to mount on the first alarm; but, as they are utter strangers to all order and discipline, these camps, always easy to surprise, afford no defence in case of an attack: accidents, therefore, very often occur, and cattle are daily carried off; a kind of pillaging warfare in which the Arabs are great adepts.

These tribes which are the immediate neigh-

bours of the Turks, are ſtill more inured to alarms and attacks; for theſe ſtrangers, arrogating to themſelves, in right of conqueſt, the property of the whole country, treat the Arabs as rebel vaſſals, or troubleſome and dangerous enemies. On this ground, they conſtantly wage ſecret or open war againſt them. The Pachas ſeize every opportunity to haraſs them. They occaſionally conteſt a territory with them which they had let them, and demand a tribute which they never conſented to pay. If a family of Shaiks is divided by intereſt or ambition, they alternately aſſiſt each party, and terminate in the deſtruction of both. They often alſo poiſon or aſſaſſinate thoſe chiefs whoſe courage or abilities they fear, though their own allies. The Arabs, again, conſidering the Turks as uſurpers and treacherous enemies, watch every opportunity to injure them. Unfortunately, the innocent more frequently ſuffer than the guilty. The inoffenſive peaſant frequently ſuffers for the ſoldier. On the ſlighteſt alarm, the Arabs cut down their harveſts, ſeize their flocks, and intercept their commerce and communication. The peaſant with good cauſe calls them thieves; but the Bedouins claim the right of war, and, perhaps, they alſo are not wrong. However this may be, theſe depredations occaſion a miſunderſtanding between the Bedouins and the inhabitants of the cultivated country, which cauſes unceaſing animoſity.

This is the external ſituation of the Arabs. Subjected to great viciſſitudes, according to the good or bad behaviour of their chiefs. At

times

times a feeble tribe raiſes and aggrandizes itſelf, whilſt another, which was formerly powerful, falls into decay, or perhaps is entirely annihilated; not that all its members periſh, but they incorporate with ſome other; and this is owing to the internal conſtitution of the tribes. Every tribe conſiſts of one or more principal families, the members of which are called Shaiks, *i. e.* chiefs or lords. Theſe families reſemble the Patricians of Rome, and the nobles of modern Europe. One of the Shaiks has the chief command over the others. He is the general of their little army, and ſometimes takes the title of *Emir*, *i. e.* Commander and Prince. The more numerous his relations, children and allies, the greater his influence and power. To theſe he adds particular adherents, whom he ſtudiouſly attaches to him, by ſupplying all their wants. But beſides this, a number of ſmall families, who, too weak to live independent, need protection and alliances, and range themſelves under the banners of this chief. This union is called *kabila*, or tribe. Theſe kabilas are diſtinguiſhed from each other by the name of their reſpective chiefs, or by that of the ruling family; and when they ſpeak of any of the individuals who compoſe them, they call them the *children* of ſuch a chief, though they may not be all really of his blood, and he himſelf may have been long ſince dead. Thus they ſay, *Beni Temin*, *Oulad Tai*, the children of Temin and of Tai. This mode of expreſſion is even applied, by metaphor, to the names of countries: the uſual phraſe for denoting their inhabitants, be-

ing to call them *the children of ſuch a place*. Thus the Arabs ſay, *Oulad Maſr*, the Egyptians; *Oulad Sham*, the Syrians: they would alſo ſay, *Oulad Franſa*, the French; *Oulad Moſkou*, the Ruſſians. This fact is, perhaps, not unimportant to ancient hiſtory.

The government of this ſociety is at once republican, ariſtocratical, and even deſpotic, without being decidedly any of them. It is republican, inaſmuch as the people have a great influence in all matters, and as nothing can be tranſacted without the conſent of a majority. It is ariſtocratical, becauſe the families of the Shaiks poſſeſs ſome of the prerogatives which every where accompany power; and, laſtly, it is deſpotic, becauſe the principal Shaik has an indefinite and almoſt abſolute authority, which, when he happens to be a man of credit and influence, he may even abuſe; but the ſtate of theſe tribes keeps even this abuſe within very narrow limits; for if a chief ſhould commit an act of injuſtice, if, for example, he ſhould kill an Arab, it would be almoſt impoſſible for him to eſcape puniſhment; the reſentment of the offended party would pay no reſpect to his dignity; the law of *retaliation* would be put in force: and, ſhould he not pay the blood, he would be infallibly aſſaſſinated; which, from the ſimple and private life the Shaiks lead in their camps, would be eaſily effected. If he haraſſes his ſubjects by ſeverity, they abandon him, and go over to another tribe. His own relations take advantage of his miſconduct to depoſe him, and advance themſelves to his ſta-

tion,

tion. His ſubjects communicate too eaſily with each other to render it poſſible for him to ſeparate their intereſts, and form a party in his favour; nor can he have any reſource in foreign troops; for how is he to pay them, ſince he receives no kind of taxes from the tribe; the wealth of the greater part of his ſubjects being limited to abſolute neceſſaries, and his own poſſeſſions being very ſmall, beſides the weight of expences with which they are loaded.

In fact, the principal Shaik in every tribe, defrays the charges of all who arrive at or leave the camp. He receives the viſits of the allies, and of every perſon who has buſineſs with them. Adjacent to his tent is a large pavilion for the reception of all ſtrangers and paſſengers. There are held frequent aſſemblies of the Shaiks and principal men, to determine on encampments and removals; on peace and war; on the differences with the Turkiſh governors and the villages; and the litigations and quarrels of individuals. This crowd, which enters ſucceſſively, he muſt treat with coffee, bread baked on the aſhes, rice, and ſometimes roaſted kid or camel; in a word, he muſt keep open table; and it is of great importance to him to be generous, as this generoſity is cloſely connected with matters of the higheſt conſequence. On the exerciſe of this his credit and his power depend. The famiſhed Arab ranks the liberality which feeds him before every virtue, nor is this prejudice without foundation; for experience has proved that covetous chiefs never were men of enlarged views: hence the proverb, as juſt as it is brief,

A close fist, a narrow heart. To provide for these expences, the Shaik has nothing but his herds, a few spots of cultivated ground, the profits of his plunder, and the tribute he levies on the high roads, the total of which is very inconsiderable. The Shaik, with whom I resided in the country of Gaza, about the end of 1784, passed for one of the most powerful of those districts; yet it did not appear to me that his expenditure was greater than that of a wealthy farmer. His personal effects, consisting in a few pelisses, carpets, arms, horses, and camels, could not be estimated at more than fifty thousand livres (little more than two thousand pounds); and it must be noticed that in this calculation, four mares of the breed of racers, are valued at six thousand livres (two hundred and fifty pounds), and each camel at ten pounds sterling. We must not, therefore, when we speak of the Bedouins, affix to the words *Prince* and *Lord*, the ideas they commonly convey; we should come nearer the truth by comparing them to substantial farmers, in mountainous countries, whose simplicity they resemble in their dress, as well as in their domestic life and manners. A Shaik, who has the command of five hundred horse, does not disdain to saddle and bridle his own, nor to give him his barley and chopped straw. In his tent, his wife makes the coffee, kneads the dough, and superintends the dressing of the victuals. His daughters and kinswomen wash the linen, and go with pitchers on their head, and veils over their faces, to draw water from the fountain. These manners agree precisely

ciſely with the deſcriptions in Homer, and the hiſtory of Abraham, in Geneſis. But it muſt be owned that it is difficult to form a juſt idea of them without being eye-witneſſes.

The ſimplicity, or if it be more proper to ſay the poverty, of the lower claſs of the Bedouins, is proportionate to that of their cheifs. All the wealth of a family conſiſts of moveables, of which the following is a pretty exact inventory. A few male and female camels, ſome goats and poultry; a mare, and her bridle and ſaddle; a tent, a lance ſixteen feet long, a crooked ſabre, a ruſty muſket, with a flint, or matchlock; a pipe, a portable mill, a pot for cooking, a leathern bucket, a ſmall coffee roaſter, a mat, ſome clothes, a mantle of black woollen, and a few glaſs or ſilver rings, which the women wear upon their legs and arms; if none of theſe are wanting, their houſe is richly furniſhed. But what the poor man ſtands moſt in need of, and what he takes moſt pleaſure in, is his mare; for this animal is his principal ſupport. With his mare the Bedouin makes his excurſions againſt hoſtile tribes, or ſeeks plunder in the country, and on the highways. They prefer mares to horſes becauſe they do not neigh, are more docile, and yield milk, which, occaſionally, allays the thirſt, and even the hunger of her rider.

Thus reſtricted to abſolute neceſſaries, the induſtry of the Arabs exceeds not their wants; all their arts conſiſt in weaving their clumſy tents, and in making mats, and butter. Their whole commerce only extends to the exchanging

camels,

camels, kids, ſtallions, and milk; for arms, clothing, a little rice or corn, and money, which they bury. They are totally ignorant of all ſcience; and have not even any idea of aſtronomy, geometry, or medicine. They have not a ſingle book; and nothing is ſo uncommon, even among the Shaiks, as to know how to read. All their literature conſiſts in reciting tales and hiſtories, in the manner of the Arabian Nights Entertainments. They have a peculiar paſſion for ſuch ſtories; and employ in them almoſt all their leiſure, of which they have a great deal. In the evening, they ſeat themſelves on the ground, at the door of their tents, or under cover, if it be cold, and there, ranged in a circle, round a little fire of dung, their pipes in their mouths, and their legs croſſed, they ſit a while in ſilent meditation, till, on a ſudden, one of them breaks forth with, *Once upon a time*— and continues to recite the adventures of ſome young Shaik, and female Bedouin: he relates in what manner the youth firſt got a ſecret glimpſe of his miſtreſs; and how he became deſperately enamoured of her; he minutely deſcribes the lovely fair, extols her black eyes, as large and ſoft as thoſe of the gazelle; her languid and empaſſioned looks, her arched eye brows, reſembling two bows of ebony: her waiſt ſtreight, and ſupple as a lance; he forgets not her ſteps, light as thoſe of the *young filley*, nor her eye-laſhes, blackened with *kohl*, nor her lips painted blue, nor her nails, tinged with the golden coloured *henna*, nor her breaſts, reſembing two pomegranates, nor her words

words ſweet as honey. He recounts the ſufferings of the young lover, *ſo waſted with deſire and paſſion, that his body no longer yields any ſhadow.* At length, after detailing his various attempts to ſee his miſtreſs, the obſtacles on the part of the parents, the invaſions of the enemy, the captivity of the two lovers, &c. he concludes, to the ſatisfaction of the audience, by reſtoring them united and happy, to the paternal tent, and by receiving the tribute paid to his eloquence, in the *Maſha allah* he has merited *. The Bedouins have alſo their love ſongs, which have more ſentiment and nature in them than thoſe of the Turks, and inhabitants of the towns; doubtleſs, becauſe the former, whoſe manners are chaſte, know what love is; while the latter, abandoned to debauchery, know of nothing but enjoyment.

When we conſider how much the condition of the Bedouins, eſpecially in the depths of the deſert, reſembles, in many reſpects, that of the ſavages in America, we ſhall be inclined to wonder why they have not the ſame ferocity; why, though they ſo often experience the extremity of hunger, the practice of devouring human fleſh was never heard of among them; and why, in ſhort, their manners are ſo much more ſociable and mild. The following obſervations ſeem to me to afford the true ſolution of this difficulty.

It would appear, at firſt view, that America, being rich in paſturage, lakes, and foreſts, is more adapted to the paſtoral mode of life than to any other. But if we conſider, that theſe foreſts

* An exclamation of praiſe, ſuch as *admirably well!*

forefts, by affording an eafy refuge to animals, protect them more furely from the power of man, we may conclude, that the favage has been induced to become a hunter, inftead of a fhepherd, by the nature of the country. In this ftate, all his habits have concurred to give him a ferocity of character. The great fatigues of the chace have hardened his body; frequent and extreme hunger, followed by a fudden abundance of game, has rendered him voracious. The habit of fhedding blood, and tearing his prey, has familiarized him to the fight of death and fufferings. Tormented by hunger, he has defired flefh; and finding it eafy to obtain that of his fellow creature, he could not long hefitate to kill him to fatisfy the cravings of his appetite. The firft experiment made, this cruelty degenerates into a cuftom; he becomes a cannibal fanguinary and atrocious; and his mind grows infenfible as his body.

The fituation of the Arab is very different. Living in vaft naked plains, without water, and without forefts, he has not been able, for want of game, or fifh, to become either a hunter or a fifherman. The camel has determined him to a paftoral life, the manners of which have influenced his whole character. Finding, at hand, a light, but conftant and fufficient nourifhment, he has acquired the habit of frugality. Content with his milk and his dates, he has not defired flefh; he has fhed no blood: his hands are not accuftomed to flaughter, nor his ears to the cries of fuffering creatures, his heart has continued fenfible and humane.

No

No ſooner did the ſavage ſhepherd become acquainted with the uſe of the horſe, than his manner of life conſiderably changed. The facility of paſſing rapidly over extenſive tracts of country, rendered him a wanderer. He was greedy from want; and became a robber from greedineſs; and ſuch is, in fact, his preſent character. A plunderer, rather than a warrior, the Arab poſſeſſes no ſanguinary courage; he attacks only to deſpoil; and, if he meets with reſiſtance, never thinks a ſmall booty is worth the trouble of murder. To irritate him, his blood muſt be ſhed; then he is as obſtinate in vengeance as he was careful to avoid danger.

The Arabs have often been reproached with this ſpirit of rapine; but, without wiſhing to defend it, we may obſerve, that one circumſtance has not been ſufficiently attended to, which is, that it only takes place towards reputed enemies, and is conſequently founded on the acknowledged laws of almoſt all nations. Among themſelves they are remarkable for a good faith, a diſintereſtedneſs, a generoſity which would do honour to the moſt civilized people. What is there more noble than that right of aſylum ſo reſpected among all the tribes? A ſtranger, nay, even an enemy, touches the tent of the Bedouin, and, from that inſtant, his perſon becomes inviolable. It would be reckoned a diſgraceful meanneſs, an indelible ſhame, to ſatisfy even a juſt vengeance at the expence of hoſpitality. Has the Bedouin conſented to *eat bread and ſalt* with his gueſt, nothing can induce him to betray him. The power of the

Sultan himself would not be able to force a refugee * from the protection of a tribe, but by its total extermination. The Bedouin, so rapacious without his camp, has no sooner set his foot within it, than he becomes liberal and generous. What little he possesses he is ever ready to divide. He has even the delicacy not to wait till it is asked: when he takes his repast, he affects to seat himself at the door of his tent, in order to invite the passengers; his generosity is so sincere, that he does not look upon it as a merit, but merely as a duty: and he, therefore, readily takes the same liberty with others. To observe the manner in which the Arabs conduct themselves towards each other, one would imagine that they possessed all their goods in common. Nevertheless, they are no strangers to property; but it has none of that selfishness which the increase of the imaginary wants of luxury has given it among polished nations. It may be alleged, that they owe this moderation to the impossibility of greatly multiplying their enjoyments; but, if it be acknowledged, that the virtues of the bulk of mankind are only to be ascribed to the necessity of circumstances, the Arabs, perhaps, are not for this less worthy our esteem. They are fortunate, at least, that this necessity should have established among them a state of things, which has appeared to the wisest legisla-

tors

* The Arabs discriminate their guests, into guest *mostadjir*, or *imploring protection*; and guest *matneuh*, *who sets up his tent in a line with theirs*; that is, who becomes naturalized.

tors as the perfection of human policy: I mean, a kind of equality in the partition of property, and the variety of conditions. Deprived of a multitude of enjoyments, which nature has lavished upon other countries, they are less exposed to temptations which might corrupt and debase them. It is more difficult for their Shaiks to form a faction to enslave and impoverish the body of the nation. Each individual, capable of supplying all his wants, is better able to preserve his character, and independence; and individual poverty becomes at once the foundation and guarantee of public liberty.

This liberty extends even to religious matters. We observe a remarkable difference between the Arabs of the towns and those of the desert; since, while the former crouch under the double yoke of political and religious despotism, the latter live in a state of perfect freedom from both: it is true that on the frontiers of the Turks, the Bedouins, from policy, preserve the appearance of Mahometanism; but so relaxed is their observance of its ceremonies, and so little fervour has their devotion, that they are generally considered as infidels, who have neither law nor prophets. They even make no difficulty in saying that the religion of Mahomet was not made for them; "for," add they, "how shall we make ablutions who have no "water? How can we bestow alms, who are "not rich? Why should we fast in the Ramadan, "since the whole year with us is one continual "fast? and what necessity is there for us to "make the pilgrimage to Mecca, if God be

"preſent every where?" In ſhort, every man acts and thinks as he pleaſes, and the moſt perfect toleration is eſtabliſhed among them. Nothing can better deſcribe, or be a more ſatisfactory proof of this than a dialogue which one day paſſed between myſelf and one of their Shaiks, named Ahmed, ſon of Bahir, chief of the tribe of Wahidia. "Why," ſaid this Shaik "to me, do you wiſh to return among the "Franks? Since you have no averſion to our "manners; ſince you know how to uſe the "lance, and manage a horſe like a Bedouin, "ſtay among us. We will give you peliſſes, a "tent, a virtuous and young Bedouin girl, and "a good blood mare. You ſhall live in our "houſe."—"But do you not know," replied "I, "that, born among the Franks, I have "been educated in their religion? In what light "will the Arabs view an infidel, or what will "they think of an apoſtate?"—"And do not "you yourſelf perceive," ſaid he, "that the "Arabs live without troubling themſelves ei"ther about the Prophet or the *Book* (the "Koran)? Every man with us follows the di"rection of his conſcience. Men have a right "to judge of actions, but religion muſt be left "to God alone."—Another Shaik, converſing with me, one day, addreſſed me, by miſtake, in the cuſtomary formulary, "Liſten, "and pray for the Prophet." Inſtead of the uſual anſwer, *I have prayed*, I replied, with a ſmile, *I liſten*. He recollected his error, and ſmiled in his turn. A Turk of Jeruſalem, who was preſent, took the matter up more ſeriouſly:

"O

"O Shaik," said he, "how canst thou address "the words of the true believers to an infidel?" "The tongue is *light*," replied the Shaik, "let "but the heart be *white* (pure); but you, who "know the customs of the Arabs, how can you "offend a stranger with whom we have eaten "bread and salt?"——Then, turning to me, "Are those tribes of Frankestan, that you say "follow not the law of the Prophet, more numerous than the Mussulmen?" "It is supposed," answered I, "that they are five or "six times more numerous, even if the Arabs "are included"—"God is just," replied he," "he will weigh them in his balance*".

* Niebuhr relates in his "Description of Arabia," a new religion had been propagated about thirty years in Najd, the principles of which are analogous to the disposition of mind I have been mentioning,—"They think" says this traveller "that God alone ought to be invoked "and adored as the author of all; that it is idolatry to "mention any prophet in prayer: that Moses, Christ, "Mahomet, &c. Certainly were great men, whose actions, had the most edifying tendency, but that no book "has been inspired by the angel Gabriel or any other celestial spirit. Lastly—That vows made under the pressure of danger are neither meritorious nor obligatory. "I do not know (adds Niebuhr) whether the authority "of the Bedouin who gave me this information is to be "depended upon. Perhaps these were only his own opinions, for although the Bedouins call themselves Ma"hometans they generally trouble themselves very little "either about Mahomet or the Koran."

This innovation was occasioned by two Arabs whose business led them to travel in Persia and Malabar where they formed those ideas of the different religions which they saw that have given rise to this universal toleration. An independent State was formed in the Najd in 1760 by one of them called Abd-el-Naheb, the other who had adopted

It muſt be allowed that there are few poliſhed nations whoſe general morality is more eſtimable than that of the Bedouin Arabs; and it is remarkable that the ſame virtues are equally practiſed among the Turkman and Kurd hordes; and all are attached to a paſtoral life. It is beſides among ſuch men as theſe that religion aſſumes leaſt exterior form. The Bedouins, the Turkmans and the Curds, have neither prieſts temples nor regular worſhip. But we muſt now proceed to the deſcription of the other inhabitants of Syria, to the conſideration of a ſocial ſtate, different from that we have been treating of, that of a people whoſe employments are of a ſedentary or agricultural nature.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the Agricultural Tribes of Syria.

PART I. SECT I.

Of the Anſarians.

THOSE who ſhould firſt be diſtinguiſhed among the inhabitants of Syria who employ themſelves in cultivation, are called in that country by

adopted the ſame opinions Mekrami Shaik of Najeran raiſed himſelf to great power by his valour. Theſe two examples are much in favour of my conjecture, that nothing could be eaſier than to effect a great revolution both political and religious in Aſia.

by the plural name Anſaria, in Deliſle's maps ſtiled Enſyrians, and, in thoſe of Danville, Naſſaris. The territory occupied by theſe Anſaria is that chain of mountains which extends from Antakia to the rivulet called *Nahr-el-Kabir*, or the Great River. The hiſtory of their origin, though little known, is yet inſtructive: I ſhall give it in the words of a writer who has drawn his materials from the beſt authorities.*

"In the year of the Greeks 1202, (A. D. 891) "there lived at the village of *Naſar* in the en- "virons of Koufa, an old man, who, from his "faſtings, his continual prayers, and his pover- "ty, paſſed for a ſaint: ſeveral of the common "people declaring themſelves his partizans, he "ſelected from among them twelve diſciples to "propagate his doctrine. But the magiſtrate "of the place, alarmed at his proceedings, ſei- "zed the old man, and confined him in priſon. "In this reverſe of fortune, his ſituation excited "the pity of a girl who was ſlave to the goaler, "and ſhe determined to give him his liberty. "An opportunity ſoon offered which ſhe failed "not to improve. One day, when the goaler "was gone to bed intoxicated, and in a pro- "found ſleep, ſhe gently took the keys from un- "der his pillow, and, after opening the door to "the old man, returned them to their place un- "perceived by her maſter: the next day, when "the gaoler went to viſit his priſoner, he was "extremely aſtoniſhed at finding he had made "his eſcape, and the more ſo ſince he could "perceive no marks of violence. He therefore "judiciouſly

* Aſſemani, *Bibliotheque orientale.*

" judiciouſly concluded he had been delivered " by an angel, and eagerly ſpread the report, " to avoid the reprehenſion he merited; the old " man, on the other hand, aſſerted the ſame " thing to his diſciples, and preached his doc- " trines with more earneſtneſs than ever. He " even wrote a book, in which, among other " things, he ſays: *I, ſuch a one, of the village of* " *Naſar, have ſeen Chriſt, who is the word of God,* " *who is Ahmad, ſon of Mohammad, ſon of Hanafa,* " *of the race of Ali; who alſo is Gabriel: and he* " *ſaid to me, Thou art he who readeth (with under-* " *ſtanding); thou art the man who ſpeaketh truth;* " *thou art the camel which preſerveth the faithful* " *from wrath; thou art the beaſt which carrieth* " *their burthen; thou art the (Holy) Spirit, and* " *John, the ſon of Zachary, Go, and preach to men,* " *that they make four genuflections in praying; two* " *before the riſing of the ſun, and two before his ſet-* " *ting, turning their faces towards Jeruſalem: and* " *let them ſay, three times, God Almighty, God moſt* " *high, God moſt great: let them obſerve only the ſe-* " *cond and third feſtival; let them faſt but two days* " *annually; let them not waſh the prepuce, nor drink* " *beer, but as much wine as they think proper; and,* " *laſtly, let them abſtain from the fleſh of carnivorous* " *animals.* This old man, paſſing into Syria, " propagated his opinions among the lower or- " ders of the country people, numbers of whom " believed in him. And, after a few years, he " diſappeared, and never was heard of more."

Such was the origin of theſe Anſarians, who are chiefly inhabitants of the mountains formerly mentioned. A little more than a century after

after this, the cruſaders, carrying the war into theſe countries, and, marching from Marrah, along the Orontes, towards Lebanon, fell in with ſome of theſe *Naſireans*, a great number of whom they ſlew. William of Tyre*, who reports this fact, confounds them with the *Aſſaſſins*, and poſſibly they might have reſembled each other; as to what he adds, that the Franks, as well as the Arabs, employed the term *aſſaſſins*, without being able to give any account of its origin; it is a problem eaſily ſolved. Haſſaſſin,† in the vulgar Arabic, ſignifies *Robbers of the night*; perſons who *lie in ambuſh to kill*; and is ſtill underſtood in this ſenſe at Cairo, and in Syria; for which reaſon it was applied to the Batanians, who ſlew by ſurpriſe. The cruſaders, who happened to be in Syria at the time this practice was moſt frequent, muſt have adopted the uſe of the term in queſtion. What they have related of the old man of the mountain, is in conſequence of an improper tranſlation of the phraſe *Shaik-el-Djebal*, which ſignifies *Lord of the mountains*, the title given by the Arabs to the chief of the Bateniens, whoſe reſidence was to the eaſt of Kourd-eſtan, in the mountains of ancient Media.

The Anſarians, as I have mentioned, are divided into ſeveral tribes or ſects; among which we diſtinguiſh the Shamſia; or adorers of the ſun; the Kelbia, or worſhippers of the dog, and the

* Book xx. chap. 30.

† The root *haſs*, with an aſpirated *h*, ſignifies to kill, to aſſaſſinate, to liſten, to ſurprize; but the compound *haſſas* is not in Golius.

Sect. II.

Of the Maronites.

To the north of the Anſarians, and ſouthward of the Druzes, we find an inconſiderable people long known under the name of *Mawarna* or *Maronites*. Their origin, and the minute difference between them and the Latins, of which communion they are, have been much diſcuſſed by eccleſiaſtical writers. All that deſerves notice, and is certainly known, with reſpect to them, is what follows:

About the end of the ſixth age of the church, while the ſpirit of retirement from the world was both new and fervid, a hermit, of the name of Maroun, lived on the banks of the Orontes, who, by his faſting, his ſolitary mode of life, and his auſterities, became much reſpected by the neighbouring people. It ſeems that, in the diſputes which at that time aroſe between Rome and Conſtantinople, he employed his credit in favour of the weſtern Chriſtians. His death, far from abating the ardor of his followers, gave new energy to their zeal: it was reported that miracles had been wrought by his remains, and, in conſequence, many perſons aſſembled from Kineſrin, from Awaſem and other places, who built at Hama a chapel and a tomb whence ſoon aroſe a convent, very celebrated in that part of Syria. The quarrels of the two Metropolitan churches encreaſed, and the whole empire entered warmly into the diſſentions of the prieſts and princes. Matters

were

were thus situated, when, about the end of the seventh century, a monk, named John the Maronite, obtained, by his talents for preaching, the reputation of being one of the most powerful supporters of the cause of the Latins, or Partisans of the Pope. Their opponents, who espoused the cause of the Emperor, and were therefore named *Melkites*, or Royalists, made at that time great progress in Lebanon. To oppose them with success, the Latins determined to send thither John the Maronite: they presented him, accordingly, to the agent of the Pope, at Antioch, who, after consecrating him Bishop of Djebal, sent him to preach in those countries. John lost no time in rallying his partisans, and in augmenting their number; but, opposed by the intrigues, and even by the open attacks, of the Melkites, thought it necessary to resist force by force; he collected all the Latins, and settled himself with them in Lebanon, where they formed a society independent both with respect to its civil and religious government. This is related by an Historian of the Lower Empire in the following words; "In the eight year "of the reign of Constantine Pogonatus, (A. D. "676), the Mardaites, collecting themselves "together, took possession of Lebanon, which "became the asylum of vagabonds, slaves, and "all sorts of rabble. They grew so powerful "there, as to stop the progress of the Arabs, "and to compel the Caliph Moawia to request "of the Greeks a truce for thirty years, obliging himself to pay a tribute of fifty horses,

" one hundred slaves, and ten thousand pieces " of gold*."

The name Mardaites, used here by this author, is derived from a Syriac word, which signifies Rebel, and is opposed to *Melkites*, or Royalists, which proves both that the Syriac was still in use at that time, and that the schism which rent the empire was as much civil as religious. Besides, it appears that the origin of the two factions, and the existence of an insurrection in these countries, were prior to these times, for, from the first ages of Mahometanism (A. D. 622), mention is made of petty independent princes, one of whom, named Youseph was sovereign of Djebail; and the other, called Kesrou, governed the interior parts of the country, which, from him, took the name of *Kesraouen*. We read likewise of another who made an expedition against Jerusalem, and died at a very advanced age at Beskonta†, where he resided. Thus, before Constantine Pogonatus, these mountains were become the refuge of malecontents, or rebels, who fled from the bigotry of the Emperors and their governors. It was doubtless for this reason, and from a similarity in their opinions, that John and his disciples took refuge there; and it was from the ascendancy they acquired, or already possessed, that the whole nation took the name of Maronites, which was less disgraceful than that of Mardaites. Be this as it may, John, having established order and military discipline among the Mountaineers, having provided them with arms

* Cedrenus. † A village of Kesraouen.

arms and leaders, they employed their liberty in combating the common enemies of the empire, and their little ſtate, and, preſently, became maſters of almoſt all the mountains as far as Jeruſalem. The ſchiſm which took place at this juncture among the Mahometans facilitated their conqueſts. Moawia rebelling againſt Ali at Damaſcus, Cahliph a Koufa, found himſelf obliged, in order to avoid being engaged in two wars at once, to make, in 678, a diſadvantageous treaty with the Greeks. Seven years after, Abd-el-Malek renewed it with Juſtinian II. on condition, however, that the Emperor ſhould free him from the Maronites. To this propoſal, Juſtinian had the imprudence to conſent, and was baſe enough to get their chief aſſaſſinated by an ambaſſador, whom the too generous man had received into his houſe without ſuſpicion of treachery. After this murder, the ſame agent ſucceeded ſo well by his intrigues that he perſuaded twelve thouſand inhabitants to quit their country, leaving a free paſſage to the Mahometan arms. Soon after another perſecution menaced the Maronites with total ruin; for the ſame Juſtinian ſent troops againſt them under Marcian and Mauritius, who deſtroyed the monaſtery of Hama, and maſſacred five hundred monks, after which they carried the war quite into Keſraouan; but, happily, at this moment, Juſtinian was depoſed, when on the point of cauſing a general maſſacre in Conſtantinople; and the Maronites, authoriſed by his ſucceſſor, falling upon Maurice, cut his army to pieces in an engagement in which he himſelf periſhed.

From this period we lose sight of them till the invasion of the Crusaders, with whom they were sometimes in alliance, and sometimes at variance. In this interval, of more than three centuries, they lost part of their possessions, and were reduced, on the Lebanon side, to their present limits, paying tribute, no doubt, as often as their Arabian or Turkman governors were able to compel them. This was the case with the Caliph of Egypt, Hakem-Bámr-Ellah, who, about the year 1014, ceded their territory to a Turkman, Prince of Aleppo. Two hundred years after, Selah-el-din having driven out the Europeans from this country, they were obliged to submit to his power, and purchase peace by contributions. At this period, that is, about the year 1215, the Maronites effected a reunion with Rome, from which they never were widely separated, and which still subsists. William of Tyre, who relates this, observes, that they had forty thousand men able to bear arms. The peace they enjoyed under the Mamlouks was disturbed by Selim the Second, but this prince, occupied by more important objects, did not take the trouble to subject them. This negligence emboldened them; and, in concert with the Druzes, and their Emir, the celebrated Faker-el-din, they made daily encroachments on the Ottomans; but these commotions had an unfortunate issue; for Amurath the Third, sending against them Ibrahim, Pacha of Cairo, that General reduced them to obedience, in 1588, and subjected them to that annual tribute which they still pay.

Since

Since then, the Pachas, thinking for extenſion of authority and extortions, have frequently attempted to introduce their garriſons and Agas into the mountains of the Maronites; but being conſtantly repulſed, they have been compelled to abide by their treaties. The ſubjection of the Maronites therefore only conſiſts in the payment of a tribute to the Pacha of Tripoli, of whom they hold their country, which he annually farms out to one or more Shaiks*, that is to ſay, perſons of eminence and property, who aſſign their reſpective ſhares to the diſtricts and villages. This impoſt is levied, chiefly, on the Mulberry-trees and vineyards, which are the principal, and almoſt the ſole objects of culture. It varies according to the ſeaſons, and the reſiſtance they can make to the Pacha. Cuſtomhouſes are eſtabliſhed likewiſe in the maritime towns, ſuch as Djebail, and Batroun; but the produce of theſe is of little conſequence.

Their form of government is not founded on any expreſs convention, but merely on uſages and cuſtoms. This inconvenienc would doubtleſs, long ere this, have produced diſagreeable effects, but for the intervention of many fortunate circumſtances. The principal of theſe is religion, which, placing an inſurmountable barrier between the Maronites and the Mahometans, has prevented ambitious men from leaguing themſelves with foreigners to enſlave their countrymen. The ſecond is the nature of the country, which every where affording ſtrong defen-

* In the mountains, the word Shaik ſignifies, properly, a man of property, or country gentleman.

ces, enables every village, and almoſt every family, to oppoſe, by its ſingle force, all uſurpation of ſovereign power. A third reaſon may be derived even from the weakneſs of this ſociety, which, having always been ſurrounded by powerful enemies, has only been able to reſiſt them by maintaining union among its members, which union can only exiſt by abſtaining from oppreſſing each other, and by reciprocally guarding the ſafety of each others perſon and property. Thus the government preſerves itſelf in a natural equilibrium, and, cuſtoms ſupplying the place of laws, the Maronites are, to this day, ſtrangers alike to deſpotiſm, and to anarchy.

The nation may be conſidered as divided into two claſſes; the common people and the Shaiks, by which muſt be underſtood the moſt eminent of the inhabitants, who, from the antiquity of their families, and the opulence of their fortunes, are ſuperior to the ordinary claſs. They all live diſperſed in the mountains, in villages, hamlets, and even detached houſes; which is never the caſe in the plains. The whole nation conſiſts of cultivators. Every man improves the little domain he poſſeſſes, or farms, with his own hands. Even the Shaiks live in the ſame manner, and are only diſtinguiſhed from the reſt by a bad Peliſs, a horſe, and a few ſlight advantages in food and lodging; they all live frugally, without many enjoyments, but alſo with few wants, they are little acquainted with the inventions of luxury. In general, the nation is poor, but no one wants neceſſaries; and

if

if beggars are ſometimes ſeen, they come rather from the ſea-coaſt than the country itſelf. Property is as ſacred among them as in Europe, nor do we ſee there thoſe robberies and extortions ſo frequent with the Turks. Travellers may journey there, either by night or day, with a ſecurity unknown in any other part of the empire, and the ſtranger is received with hoſpitality, as among the Arabs; it muſt be owned, however, that the Maronites are leſs generous, and rather inclined to the vice of parſimony. Conformably to the doctrines of Chriſtianity, they have only one wife, whom they eſpouſe frequently, without having ſeen, and always, without having been much in her company. Contrary to the precepts of that ſame religon, however, they have admitted, or retained, the Arab cuſtom of retaliation, and the neareſt relation of a murdered perſon is bound to avenge him. From a habit founded on diſtruſt, and the political ſtate of the country, every one, whether Shaik, or peaſant, walks continually armed with a muſket and poniards. This is, perhaps, an inconvenience; but this advantage reſults from it, that they have no novices in the uſe of arms among them, when it is neceſſary to employ them againſt the Turks. As the country maintains no regular troops, every man is obliged to join the army in the time of war, and if this militia were well conducted, it would be ſuperior to many European armies. From accounts taken in late years, the number of men, fit to bear arms, amounts to thirty-five thouſand. According to the uſual mode of computatior

putation, this would imply a population of about a hundred and five thousand souls; and, if we add the priests, monks and nuns dispersed through upwards of two hundred convents, and the inhabitants of the maritime towns, such as Djebail, Batroun, &c. we cannot estimate it at less than a hundred and fifteen thousand. This number, compared with the extent of the country, which is about a hundred and fifty leagues square, gives seven hundred and sixty inhabitants for each square league; which will not appear a small population, when we consider that great part of Lebanon consists only of barren rocks, and that the soil, even where it can be cultivated, produces very little.

In their religious concerns, the Maronites are dependent on Rome. Though they acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, their clergy continue, as heretofore, to elect a head, with the title of Batrak, or patriarch of Antioch. Their priests marry, as in the first ages of the church; but their wives must be maidens, and not widows, nor can they marry a second time. They celebrate mass in Syriac, of which the greatest part of them comprehend not a word. The gospel, alone, is read aloud in Arabic, that it may be understood by the people. The communion is administered in both kinds. The Host is a small round loaf, unleavened, of the thickness of a finger, and something larger than a crown piece. On it is the impression of a seal, which is eaten by the priest, who cuts the remainder into small pieces, and, putting them into the cup, administers to each person with a spoon

ſpoon which ſerves every body. Theſe prieſts have not, as among us, benefices or ſtated revenues; but they ſubſiſt on the produce of their maſſes, the bounty of their hearers, and the labour of their hands. Some of them exerciſe trades, others cultivate a ſmall piece of land, and all are induſtriouſly employed for the maintenance of their families, and the edification of their flock. Their poverty is recompenſed by the great reſpect which is paid them; their vanity is inceſſantly flattered; whoever approaches them, whether rich or poor, great or ſmall, is anxious to kiſs their hands, which they fail not to preſent; nor are they pleaſed that the Europeans withhold this mark of reverence, ſo repugnant to our manners, though not thought humiliating by the natives, who are accuſtomed to it from the infancy. In other reſpects, the ceremonies of the Catholic religion are not performed more publicly, or with leſs reſtraint, in Europe than in the Keſraouan. Each village has its chapel and its prieſt, and each chapel its bell: a thing unheard of in any other part of Turkey. The Maronites are vain of this privilege, and that they may not be deprived of it, will not ſuffer a Mahometan to live among them. They aſſume to themſelves, alſo, the privilege of wearing the Green Turban, which would coſt a Chriſtian his life any where elſe.

Italy itſelf has not more biſhops than this little corner of Syria; they here ſtill retain the ſimplicity of the primitive ages; and may be often met on the roads, mounted on a mule, and followed by a ſingle Sacriſtan. The greater

er part of them live in convents, where their food and dress does not differ from that of the other monks; nor does their usual revenue exceed fifteen hundred livres, (about sixty-three pounds) which, in this country, where every article of life is cheap, enables them to live comfortably. They, as well as the priests, are chosen from the class of monks; and are generally elected for their pre-eminence in learning, which is not difficult to acquire, since the bulk of the monks and priests know nothing but the catechism and the bible. It is nevertheless remarkable, that these two subordinate classes are more amiable in their manners, and live more edifying lives, while the bishops and the patriarch, on the contrary, constantly engaged in cabals, disputes of precedency, and religious distinctions, throw the whole country into commotion. Under pretext of exercising ecclesiastical discipline, according to the ancient rules of the church, they mutually excommunicate each other, and their respective adherents; they suspend priests, interdict the monks, and inflict public penance no the laity; in a word, they have retained the turbulent and intriguing spirit, which was the scourge of the Lower Empire. The court of Rome, frequently embarrassed by their disputes, strives to pacify them, in order to preserve the only asylum of her power remaining in these countries. It is not long since she was obliged to interpose in a curious affair, an account of which will convey some idea of the character of the Maronites.

About 1735, there was, in the neighbourhood of

of the Jeſuit Miſſionaries, a Maronite girl, named Hendia, whoſe extraordinary mode of life began to attract the attention of the people. She faſted, wore the hair-cloth, poſſeſſed the gift of tears; and, in a word, had all the exterior of the ancient hermits, and ſoon acquired a ſimilar reputation. Every body conſidered her as a model of piety, and many eſteemed her a ſaint. From ſuch a reputation to miracles the tranſition is very eaſy, and, in fact, it was ſoon reported that ſhe worked miracles. To have a proper conception of the effects of this report, we muſt not forget that the ſtate of mens minds in Lebanon, is nearly the ſame as in the earlieſt ages. There were neither infidels therefore, nor wits, nor even doubters. Hendia availed herſelf of this enthuſiaſm for the completion of her deſigns; and, imitating the conduct of her predeceſſors in the ſame career, ſhe wiſhed to become the foundreſs of a new order. In vain does the human heart endeavour to conceal its paſſions, they are invariably the ſame; nor does the conqueror differ from the monk; both are alike actuated by ambition and the luſt of power; and the pride of pre-eminence diſplays itſelf even in the exceſs of humility. To build the convent, money was neceſſary; the foundreſs ſolicited the pious charity of her followers, who contributed ſo liberally as to enable her, in a few years, to erect two vaſt ſtone houſes, which would not have coſt leſs than one hundred and twenty thouſand livres (five thouſand pounds). They are called the Kourket, and are ſituated on the ridge of a hill,

to

to the north-weſt of Antoura, commanding, to the weſt, a view of the ſea, which is very near, and an extenſive proſpect, to the ſouth, as far as the road of Bairout, which is four leagues diſtant. The Kourket ſoon filled with monks and nuns. The Patriarch for the time being was director-general, other employments, of various kinds, were conferred on the prieſts and candidates, to whom one of theſe houſes was allotted. Every thing ſucceeded as well as could have been deſired; it is true that many of the nuns died, but this was imputed to the air, and the true cauſe was not eaſy to be diſcovered. Hendia had reigned over her little kingdom near twenty years, when an unforeſeen accident threw every thing into confuſion. A factor, travelling from Damaſcus to Bairout, in the ſummer, was overtaken by night, near this convent: the gates were ſhut, the hour unſeaſonable; and, as he did not wiſh to give any trouble, he contented himſelf with a bed of ſtraw, and laid himſelf down in the outer court, to wait the return of day. He had ſlept but a few hours, when a ſudden noiſe of doors and bolts awaked him. From one of the doors came out three women, with ſpades and ſhovels in their hands; who were followed by two men, carrying a long white bundle, which appeared very heavy. They proceeded towards an adjoining piece of ground, full of ſtones and rubbiſh, where the men laid down their load, dug a hole into which they put it, and, covering it with earth, trod it down with their feet, after which they all returned to the houſe. The ſight

of

of men with nuns, and this bundle, thus myſteriouſly buried by night, could not but furniſh matter of reflection to the traveller. Surpriſe, at firſt, kept him ſilent, but anxiety and fear ſoon ſucceeded; he, therefore, at break of day, haſtily ſet off for Bairout. In this town he was acquainted with a merchant, who, ſome months before, had placed two of his daughters in the Kourket, with a portion of about four hundred pounds. He went in queſt of him, ſtill heſitating, yet burning with impatience to relate his adventure. They ſeated themſelves croſs-legged, the long pipe was lighted, and coffee brought. The merchant then proceeded to enquire of his viſitor concerning his journey, who replied, he had paſſed the night near the Kourket. This produced freſh queſtions, to which he anſwered by further particulars, and, at length, no longer able to contain himſelf, whiſpered to his hoſt what he had ſeen. The merchant was greatly amazed, the circumſtance of burying the bundle alarmed him: and the more he thought of it the more his uneaſineſs increaſed. He knew that one of his daughters was ill, and could not help remarking that a great many nuns died. Tormented with theſe thoughts, he knows not how either to admit or reject the diſmal ſurmiſings they occaſion; he mounts his horſe, and, accompanied by a friend, they repair together to the convent, where he aſks to ſee his daughters; he is informed they are ſick; he inſiſts they ſhall be brought to him; this is angrily refuſed, and the more he perſiſts, the more poſitive is the refuſal, till his ſurmiſes are converted into cer-

tainty. Leaving the convent, in an agony of deſpair, he went to Dair-el-Kamar; and laid all the particulars before Saad, Kiaya* of prince Youſef, chief of the mountain. The Kiaya was greatly aſtoniſhed, and ordered a body of horſe to accompany him, and, if refuſed admiſſion, to force the convent; the Kadi took part with the merchant, and the affair was referred to the law; the ground where the bundle had been buried was opened, and a dead body found, which the unhappy father diſcovered to be that of his youngeſt daughter: the other was found confined in the convent, and almoſt dead. She laid open a ſcene of ſuch deteſtable wickedneſs, as makes human nature ſhudder, and to which ſhe, like her ſiſter, was about to fall a victim. The pretended ſaint, being ſeized, acted her part with firmneſs; and a proſecution was commenced againſt the prieſts and the patriarch. The enemies of the latter combined to ruin him, in order to ſhare his ſpoils, and he was ſuſpended, and depoſed. The affair was carried to Rome in 1776, and the Society *de Propaganda*, on examination, diſcovered the moſt infamous ſcenes of debauchery, and the moſt horrible cruelties. It was proved that Hendia procured the death of the nuns, ſometimes to get poſſeſſion of their property, and at others, becauſe they would not comply with her deſires; that this infamous woman not only communicated, but even conſecrated the hoſt, and ſaid maſs: that ſhe had holes under her bed, by which perfumes were introduced at the moment ſhe pretended to be in

* The title of the miniſter of theſe petty princes.

in extacy, and under the influence of the Holy Ghoſt; that ſhe had a faction who cried her up, and publiſhed that ſhe was the mother of God, returned upon earth, and a thouſand other extravagancies. Notwithſtanding this, ſhe retained a party powerful enough to prevent the ſevere puniſhment ſhe deſerved. She has been confined in different convents, from whence ſhe has often eſcaped. In 1783, ſhe was preſent at the viſitation of Antoura, and the brother of the Emir of the Druzes was anxious to ſet her at liberty. Numbers ſtill believe in her ſanctity; and, but for the accident of the traveller, her preſent enemies would not have doubted it. What idea muſt we form of reputations for piety, when on ſuch trifling circumſtances their foundations are laid!

In the little territory of the Maronites there are reckoned upwards of two hundred convents for men and women. Their order is that of St Anthony, whoſe rules they obſerve with an exactneſs which reminds us of earlier times. The dreſs of the monks is made of coarſe brown woollen ſtuff, and reſembles that of the Capuchin Friars in Europe. Their food is the ſame as that of the peaſants, except that they never eat fleſh. They obſerve frequent faſts, and make long prayers at ſtated hours in the night, as well as the day; the remainder of their time is employed in cultivating the earth, or breaking the rocks to form the walls of the terraces which ſupport their vineyards and mulberry plantations. Each convent has a brother ſhoemaker, a brother taylor, a brother weaver, a

brother baker; in short, an artist of every necessary trade. We generally find a convent of women close to one of men; yet scandalous reports are very rare. These women themselves lead a very laborious life, and it is this, doubtless, which secures them against all the mischiefs attendant on idleness. So far, therefore, from being injurious to population, we may assert that the industry of these convents have contributed to promote it, by increasing every article in a proportion greater than its consumption. The most remarkable of the houses of the Maronite Monks is Koz-haia, six hours journey to the east of Tripoli. There they exorcise, as in the early ages of the church, those who are possessed with devils; for such persons are still to be found in these countries. Not many years ago, our merchants at Tripoli saw one of them who put the patience and learning of the monks to the proof: This man, who outwardly appeared healthy, was subject to sudden convulsions, which threw him into a kind of madness, sometimes sullen, at others violent. He tore, he bit, he foamed at the mouth; his usual expression was,—*The sun is my mother, let me adore her.* The priests almost drowned him with ablutions, vexed him with fasting and prayer, and, at length, as they reported, drove out the devil; but, from the account given me by more intelligent observers, it appears that those possessed are no other than persons afflicted with idiotsy, madness, and epilepsies; and it is worth remarking, that *possessed by a devil* and *epileptic* are expressed by the same Arabic word.*

The

* *Kabal* and *Kabat*. The *K* here is the *Spanish jota*.

The Court of Rome, when adopting the Maronites, granted them an Hoſpitium there, to which they may ſend ſeveral of their youth, to receive a gratuitous education. It is natural to be ſuppoſed that this inſtitution would introduce among them the ideas and arts of Europe; but the pupils of this ſchool, limited to an education purely monaſtic, bring home nothing but the Italian language, which is uſeleſs, and a ſtock of theological learning, from which as little advantage can be derived; they accordingly ſoon aſſimilate with the reſt. Nor has a greater change been effected by the three or four miſſionaries maintained by the French capuchins at Gazir, Tripoli, and Bairout. Their labours conſiſt in preaching in their church, in inſtructing children in the catechiſm, Thomas a Kempis, and the Pſalms, and teaching them to read and write. The Jeſuits had formerly two miſſionaries at their houſe at Antoura, and the Lazarites have now ſucceeded them in their miſſion. The moſt important advantage that has ariſen from theſe apoſtolical labours is, that the art of writing is become more general among the Maronites, and rendered them, in this country, what the Copts are in Egypt; I mean, they are in poſſeſſion of all the poſts of writers, intendants, and kiayas among the Turks, and chiefly of thoſe among their friends and neighbours, the Druzes.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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